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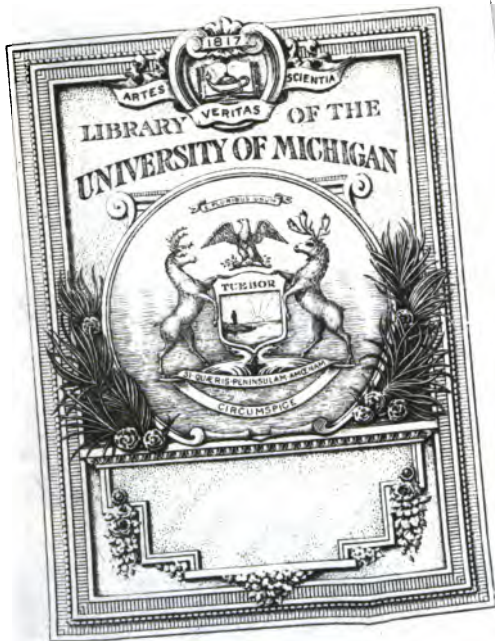
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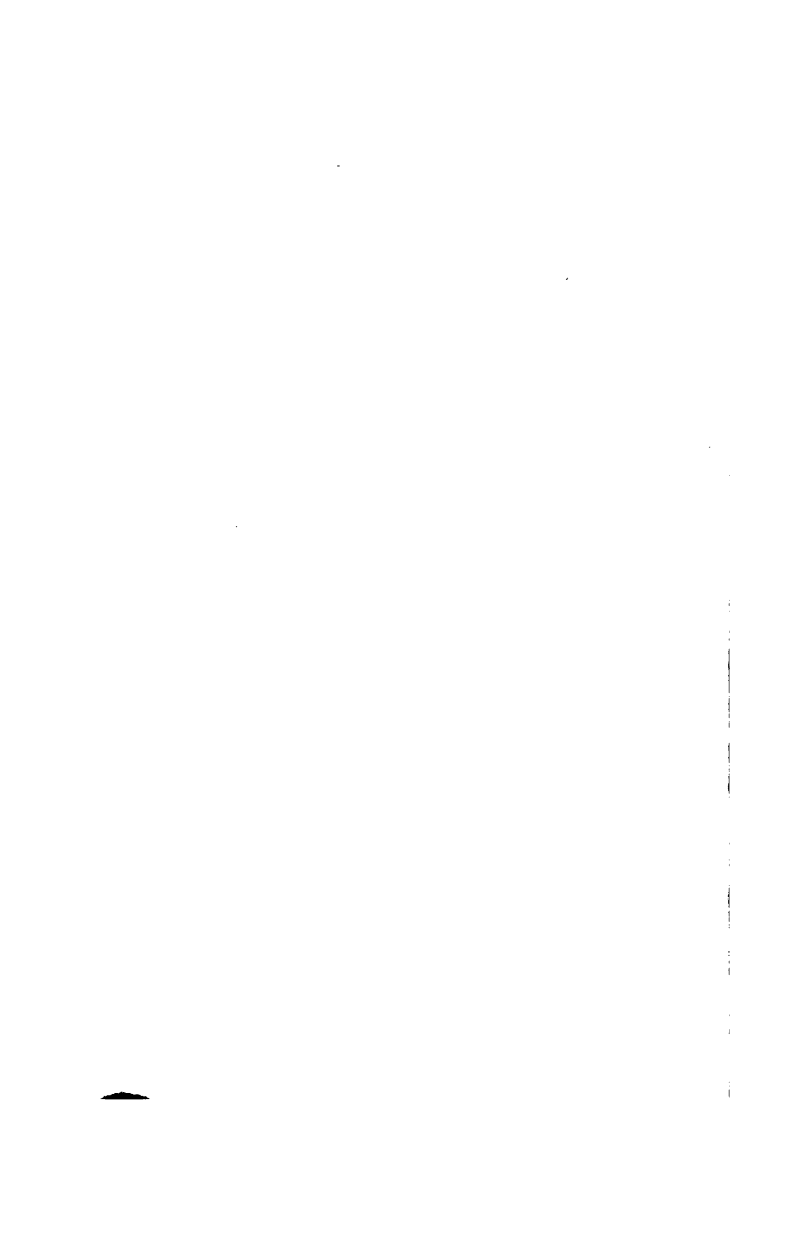
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Catholicism :
Or, Several
ENQUIRIES
TOUCHING

{ Visible Church-membership,
{ Church-Communion,
{ The Nature of Schism ;
And the Usefulness of
National Constitutions

For the furtherance of
R E L I G I O N.

By *W. A.*

L O N D O N :

Printed by M. C. for *Walter Kettilby,*
at the Bishops head in *St. Pauls*
Church-yard. 1683.

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The initial Faith stands in such a lower degree of assent of the mind unto the Truth of the Gospel concerning Christ his being the Son of God or Saviour of Sinners, as has not yet thorow its power over the Will, renewed the whole man so as to become Regenerate or a new creature. But the Faith consummate or complete lies in such a firm assent of the mind unto the Truth of the Gospel, as by which through frequent consideration of the things assented to, the Will is changed and renewed in its inclinations, motions and affections, in reference both to Sin and Duty.

This difference between Faith and Faith is fairly set out in the Scriptures. St. James, chap. 2.
treat 6

treats of a Faith that will not
avail to Justification and Sal-
vation, and of that also which
will. The one is the Faith which
is alone or by it self, verse 15.
which has not yet purified the
heart from earthly affections, and
fleshy lusts, nor brought forth the
fruit of the Spirit, but is dead, and
remains barren. But the other
Faith which will avail to Justifi-
cation, is operative and vigo-
rous, producing internal and ex-
ternal acts of Christian Obedience,
by which its made perfect, ver. 22.
that is, it is thereby made to at-
tain its end in the Justification of
the person that hath it. This
Faith worketh by Love, and is
thereby consummate or made per-
fect. Gal. 5. For the Greek word
according

THE
P R E F A C E
TO THE
R E A D E R.

ONE would think any thing should be acceptable to dissenting Brethren, which has a true tendency to deliver them from those mistaken notions of things which do expose them to much trouble from Men, and from the Laws themselves; and by means of which they are an occasion of trouble and danger to the Nation. And it is but reasonable to expect
A 2 that

that things of this nature should be consider'd by them now at such a time as this, tho' neglected during the time in which those Opinions put them to no trouble. The hope of which and the sorrow to see Christian Brethren to suffer great inconveniencies to themselves needlessly, has been a motive to me to make these sheets publick at this time; as not doubting but that if judiciously and impartially weighed, they with other writings of like nature, may be of good use to discover to them their mistakes.

Their Separation from parochial Communion which does expose them to trouble, does proceed principally from their mistakes (as I conceive them to be) either about
that

that which makes men members of the visible Church, or that which gives them Right to the external Priviledges thereof; or about the external manner of publick worship. There are many of the Dissenters whose notion of the visible Church, and of Mens Right to Communion in the external Priviledge of it, seems much narrower than the Scriptures represent those things to be. They make that to be necessary to visible Church-membership and Communion, which is but necessary to Invisible Church-Communion. And then they make this qualification necessary not only by way of Duty, but of Condition also, without which in humane judgement persons ought not to be admitted into

Church fellowship, or unto Communion in the external privileges of the Church. Which notion and correspondent practice of theirs, I have endeavored to discover to be plainly contrary to the whole current of the Scriptures touching these matters, both of the Old Testament and of the New, both as to doctrine and matters of fact.

That which hath betrayed them into this mistake, seems to have been the want of distinguishing between the internal and external state of the Church; for want of which they confound them, and make that which is but necessary to the Being of the Church as invisible, to be so likewise to the Being of it as it is visible. The
Church

The Preface,

Church being described in Scripture but as a little flock, and that as our Saviour says there are but few which find the narrow way which leads to Life, and enter in at the strait gate; and because the qualification of those of the invisible Church who shall be saved, as described in Scripture, seems to agree but to a few of those who profess the Christian Religion; and because the Church is but One; hereupon they come to be persuaded that none are really and truly of the Church but such whose qualification agrees with their description to whom Salvation is indeed promised. But as for others they esteem them no more to be true and real Members of the Church,

*than wooden Legs and glass Eyes
are Members of the Body of a
Man.*

*But then there are Scriptures
which must be considered likewise
which have foretold of the coming
of many whole Nations into the
Church both Kings and their
People, and of the numerous in-
crease of it, when a little one
shall become a thousand, and a
small one a strong Nation: when
the stone cut out of the
mountain without hands shall
fill the wole Earth, when for
number they shall say the
place is too strait for me: give
place to me that I may dwell,
and the like; for there are many
such Predictions in Scripture,
Now unless they will say that
whole*

whole Nations and those vast numbers forementioned, are all of the Church as invisible (which is more then they will or can say) they must of necessity admit of a distinction of a two-fold state of one and the same Catholick Church, the one external and visible, the other internal and invisible. And if this distinction be admitted, then these Predictions concerning the vast extent of the Church, will be fairly reconcileable to those other Scriptures which speak of it in a more contracted and limited sense; without which they seem irreconcilable. For what some Scriptures speak touching the paucity or fewness of Church-members, and what others say touching a far greater number,
of

of which the Church doth and will consist, are both true in different respects; the one in respect of the Internal and Invisible state of the Church; the other in respect of that which is external and visible. And this distinction is fairly justified by what our blessed Saviour hath said more than once, to wit, that many are called, but few are chosen.

And if any should fancie that this twofold state of Church-members implies two Churches, the one visible, the other invisible; there is no ground for it, since those who are of the Church as invisible, are the same Persons which are in external and visible Union and Communion with those who are of the Church only as visible,

sible, and so make one Church with them. But we cannot say they make one Church with these, and another by themselves, for then there would be two Churches indeed, and yet of the same persons for a considerable part.

Considering then this twofold state of the Church, it will not be difficult at all to conceive how and why a participation in the external priviledges of the Church, does belong to all that are externally and visibly of it, when yet a participation in the internal and invisible priviledges of it, belongs only to those who are of the Church in respect of its invisible as well as visible state. As there are different qualifications of persons of the same Church, so there are
different

different privileges which belong to them accordingly ; external ones to them who are only externally qualified, and both external and internal ones to them who are qualified for both.

Now this different state of the Church being so apparent as it is in Scripture ; as also that those who have but common grace and yet Baptized, are really and truly of the visible Church : I say the consideration of these things hath enclined me to touch upon several things which seem to render it very improbable at least, that the Apostles should admit none into the Church by Baptism, but such as they judged to believe so effectually, as to be thereby Regenerate before they would Baptize them.

To

To what is said in my inquiries into these matters, I shall here add a little more for our better Understanding that case or question.

The question is whether it be probable that the Apostles admitted none into the Church by Baptism, but upon Supposition that they had a true justifying saving faith before such admission. And hereby faith in this question is not meant faith objectively, but subjectively considered. For it is agreed that a profession of a belief of the same truth doctrinally considered, is necessary to visible Church-membership by Baptism in the adult, which if believed as it ought to be, will be sufficient unto Justification and
Salva-

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Salva-

Salvation : and such is the Belief That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, John 20. 31. Acts 8. 37. But the question is whether a less degree of belief of saving doctrine be not sufficient to visible Church-membership, than is sufficient unto Justification and Salvation? and whether it is not probable that the Apostles did admit some into the Church by Baptism upon the appearance and probable evidence of such a Faith? And in order to the making a due judgment in this case, it is necessary to know what this Faith is, and wherein it differs from justifying and saving Faith. The one for distinction sake we call a Faith initial or inchoate, the other a Faith consummate or complete.

The

according to learned Authors, is in the middle voice, and may be taken actively or passively, or rather both, it working by Love, is thereby consummate or made perfect. Dr. Hammond understands it in a passive sence, and reads it thus, Faith which is consummate by Love. When St. Paul saith, I could not write to you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ, because of the envy, strife and division they lived in, 1 Cor. 3. 1. his words seem to intimate that men might be babes in Christ by such a Faith as fell short of purifying the heart, and working by love, and which left them in a carnal state. And when S. Peter saith, Add to your Faith Vir-

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tue,

tue, &c. 2 Pet. 1. 5. he suppo-
seth it very possible for some Chri-
stians to have a faith without the
addition of those Christian virtues
there enumerated, and to be bar-
ren and unfruitful in the know-
ledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,
as it follows Vers. 8, 9. And
we read of some who believed in
Christ when they saw his Mira-
cles, to whom yet he would not
commit himself, Joh. 2. 23. and
of others who believed on him,
but would not confess him, lest
they should be put out of the Syna-
gogue, and because they loved the
praise of men more than the praise
of God. John 12. 42. And it is
said of Magus that Simon him-
self also believed, Act. 8. 13.

This

This may suffice to shew what that Faith is which falls short of that which is Justifying, and wherein it differs from it. I shall now improve this to shew how unlikely a thing it is, that the Apostles should receive none into the Church by Baptism but such as they esteem'd to have a Justifying Faith.

1. *It is no ways probable that those who had lived in the darknesses of Paganism, should ordinarily if at all, in their first beginning to believe, believe unto Justification, but that there was some space of time between their first believing, and their believing unto Justification: and if so, then it cannot be probable that the Apostles who Baptised men*

presently and when they first began to believe, would Baptize them under the notion of their having already believed unto Justification. Now the reason why it is not probable that such men when they first began to believe, did then believe unto Justification is this ; because men do not believe unto Justification untill their Faith hath wrought such a change in the whole man as by which they become Regenerate, as I have shew'd : for we cannot say God justifies unregenerate men while they are such. Now such a change as this ; is not ordinarily if at all, wrought in an instant and as soon as men begin to believe. For the word of God by believing of which this change is wrought,

wrought, does not effect it physically, but morally, by causing such thoughts and considerations to rise in the mind, as do by degrees alter and change the moral frame and constitution of the Soul. For tho' the Spirit of God is the principal Agent, and the word of God his Instrument in this work, yet he causeth this change by working upon mens thoughts, and by bringing them seriously to consider the things they believe, whereunto they tend, and how they were concern'd in them. And mens discerning things of this nature, and consequently their thoughts and considerations about them are brought on but by degrees, as light comes in, being confusedly and indistinctly discerned at first.

And the assent of the mind to the truth of things to be believed, cannot exceed the minds discerning the credibility of the evidence upon which they are to be believed, but so long as the one is weak the other will be weak also. And so far as the assent of the mind is but weak, so far its operation upon the will to alter and change it, will be but weak likewise; as the one is wrought gradually, so is the other. Men may be forced to believe whether they will or no thro' the strength of conviction, as that signifies the assent of the mind, when yet the will is not thereby prevailed upon to consent and yield to the dictates of the mind, for some considerable time, and sometimes never. And let

let a mans faith or belief be what it will, yet untill it prevails over the will (which is the great wheel in the Soul, that gives motion both to a mans affections and actions) to alter and change it as to its prevailing bent and inclination, its far enough from putting a man into a justified state. And when ever the will is brought to comply with the assent and judgement of the mind in this great matter, yet it is then ordinarily a work of time and the fruit of many thoughts and considerations: for want of which tho' men do believe, their Faith will languish and bring forth no fruit to perfection, as we are taught in the Parable by the seed which did so for want of much Earth, which

[a 4] answers

answers to the want of many thoughts and considerations.

All these things consider'd then, that since a Faith which bath not Regenerated those in whom it is, falls short of a Justifying Faith ; and since Faith in its beginning and lowest pitch is ordinarily so weak and inoperative to effect so great a change as Regeneration signifies, untill by many thoughts and considerations it has gathered some strength ; and since for it to do so is a work of time ; and since the Apostles from whose writings these things are collected, baptised those upon their first believing or beginning to believe, who had untill then lived in the darkness of Paganism ; I say these things considered, make it very improbable

bable that the Apostles Baptised none but upon supposition and probable presumption that they all had a justifying Faith before they Baptised them.

If any shall say it was upon a charitable perswasion in the Apostles that those whom they Baptised had such a Faith as by which they either were already regenerated and justified, or would be in time, that they Baptised them, I shall not oppose them herein. But the saying thus does suppose and grant that the Apostles did not account such a Faith as by which men were already before Baptism regenerate and justified, necessary to qualifie them for Baptism, if they had but such a Faith which gave them ground

the Apostles Commission to Baptise, must needs extend to the Baptising of such. And it is no ways likely that the Apostles would make exception in reference to the Baptising of persons, where their Commission made none, but that they Baptised all that were at all disciples as such, without discrimination or making a difference between believers and believers, or disciples and disciples, in reference to their Baptising of such : Nor does it all appear by any the least hint in Scripture that they did. Indeed our Saviour in Commissionating his Apostles, seems to make a difference between teaching men so as to make them disciples capable of Baptism, and the teaching them
after-

afterwards how to live a truly Christian Life : he seems to have directed them to bring them first to believe Christ to be the Son of God, the Messiah, the Saviour, the great Prophet that brought to men the way of Salvation, and to engage them to become disciples unto him and his Religion, and to baptize them into it ; and then afterwards to instruct them in the particulars of their duty : And this the double teaching mentioned in their Commission, Mat. 28. 19, 20. seems to imply, and their baptizing men so suddenly and upon so little Teaching as they did, does likewise infer.

I have also given some account in the Tenth Enquiry, how agreeable it is to the Wisdom and Goodness

ness of God towards men in several respects, to admit such as have but common grace, into the Church as visible: and if it be so, then they act cross to Gods gracious design who labour to keep them out of it.

Another mistake upon which Separation from parochial Communion is founded, is an opinion that our blessed Saviour has been more particular then indeed he has, in determining the external manner and circumstances of Gods publick worship.

For the promoters of Separation were wont heretofore to suggest to us from those words concerning Christ, Heb. 3. 2. That he was faithful to him that appointed him, as Moses was faithful

faithful in all his House. *That Christ had given direction in particular about the worship of God, and the orders to be observed in his House now under the Gospel, as Moses had done under the Law. And accordingly they often urged that care should be taken, that all things be done according to the Pattern in the Mount. By which many people became disaffected to the worship of God by the use of a Liturgy, in as much as they could not find our Saviour to have given any precept or direction for the worshipping God in such a way, or after such manner.*

Whereas the faithfulness of Christ to him that had appointed him, did not stand in being as
par-

particular as Moses was in his directions touching the worship of God, and orders of his House, but in doing and teaching so much and all that the Father had appointed him, as Moses also had done. And since we find that our Saviour has not been so particular in his directions touching these matters as Moses was, we thereby know that the Father did not appoint him to be so, because he was faithful in observing all that was appointed him. Now that our Saviour has not been so particular in his directions touching the external manner of Gods worship as Moses was, will quickly appear if we do but compare what was done by him in this kind, and what was done by
Moses

Moses. *Under the Law God did not only prescribe the matter and substance of his worship, as the several sorts of Sacrifices and Oblations; but also the particular circumstances relating to them, as the place where the Sacrifice should be killed, and on which side the Altar, and how it should be dressed, and about the Fire of the Altar, and the orderly laying of the Wood upon it, and how the Parts of the Sacrifice should be laid upon the Wood. And besides all this, there were Laws directing how the Priests should be Accounted in their Ministrati-on, as of what, and after what manner and fashion their Garments should be made, and when put on, and when put off. And I*
[b] might

might instance in many like things in other cases.

But now in the New Testament it is far otherwise ; There we are directed indeed in the Substance and Spiritual Nature of Divine Worship, and what is essential to it : But as for the External circumstances of Administration thereof, we have very little of particular direction therein ; but the Church in those things is left for the most part, to guide and determine her self and her own actions by general Rules, such as Edification, Peace and Order, and such External signs of Reverence and Devotion, as Natural Religion will direct men in. And indeed there is so little of particular direction in these things,
as

as that there is no sort of Christians however distinguished, but do more, and are under a necessity of doing more in the External manner of Worship; than there is particular direction for in Scripture.

There is a command for Baptising Disciples in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost: but no particular direction what Prayer shall be made, or what Instruction shall be given at the Administration of Baptism, nor after what manner or form the Party Baptised shall by himself or Parents, enter into Covenant with God. The like may be said touching the Lords Supper: there is no particular direction what Prayers shall be made, or Instru-
[b 2] tion

Etion given, or Exhortation made at the Administration of it, nor after what manner the Elements are to be Consecrated; otherwise than by reciting the words of Institution; nor how in particular the Cup is to be Blessed, nor what Gesture shall be used, nor when and how often it shall be Received. In these things Churches in several Nations may and do vary more or less, and yet all is well done so long as they keep to general Rule, which may be observed and kept to in these and other Ordinances of Worship under several different Circumstances; and this none can deny.

And so far publick Prayer, tho' we have particular Rules for the matter of it, and to whom and
in

in whose Name to be made, and likewise for the Internal manner : yet as to the External manner and circumstances (save that of being made in a known Tongue) as whether it shall be made in a set Form or without (except the direction given for the use of the Lords Prayer,) or whether with the use of a Book or without it, or whether kneeling or standing, or how many shall be made at one Church Assembly; these things are not particularly determined one way or other, but are left to the prudence of men to use one or another, according as the exigence of Circumstances shall require, on their Governors order.

And if our Blessed Saviour had not intended to have allowed

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such

such a liberty in the choice of External Circumstances of Worship; we cannot in reason but think he would have been as particular in determining them, as he has been in the matter and substance of Worship it self, which yet we see he has not been. For he could not but know it impossible for all Church Guides not immediately inspired (tho' otherwise never so wise and good) to pitch upon the self-same Circumstances of Administration, where they have only general Rules to Guide them in their Choice. And accordingly experience shews that among good men, some have thought such and such Circumstances of Worship best to agree with general Rules, when others as good as they have thought

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thought others to do so. And tho' in such cases both cannot be best under the same Circumstances of things, yet that which is not best in it self may be best to be used as Circumstances may fall out, as when that which is not best cannot be refused without a greater inconvenience than the use of that rather than a better does amount to.

Our Blessed Saviour then having left his People at so much liberty in the choice of External Circumstances of Worship as we see he has, it argues sufficiently that the use of different Circumstantial modes of Worship is not at all displeasing unto him, so long as they agree with the general Rule, especially when the avoiding of a

[b 4] Breach

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Breach, and the preservation of Peace, Unity, and good Will in the Church, does influence the choice.

*If there be then such a liberty left by Christ unto his Church of using different Circumstantial modes of Worship, so long as they answer to the general Rule, as none can with any colour of reason deny but there is; then it cannot but be a great abuse of this liberty, for Christians so to contend for one of these Circumstantial modes of Worship, in opposition to the other, as to separate and break Communion about it, and thereby to involve the Church in unpeaceable strife and contention, disaffection and feuds. When it is but matter of liberty to use one or
another,*

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another, and not matter of indispensable Duty to use one only and not the other; it cannot but be an abuse of such a liberty to make use of it to a publick hurt to the Church. The making use of that which is but only matter of liberty, when to do so causeth a Brother to offend, is severely condemned by St. Paul; how much more then is the making use of such liberty to be blamed when it tends to a great and publick mischief in the Church? St. Paul saith, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, onely use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another, Gal. 5. 13. That the using of this liberty we speak of has been an occasion for the flesh to shew it

it self and play its part, is sadly visible in that variance, strife, emulation and envying, which has been caused thereby; which are works of the flesh, and such too that as St. Paul saith, they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God, Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21.

I know it will be said, that if it be an abuse of liberty to contend so much for the use of one External way and manner of Worship, when another is Lawful as well as that, and when to do so tends to strife and division, and the destruction of Charity; then it must be alike abuse of liberty to impose the use of another, when such an imposition is attended with the same, or like evil or inconvenience.

convenience, as we see the imposition of that prescribed by the Liturgy is. To this I shall say but these two things.

1. If we should suppose this to be so as they object; yet the abuse of a liberty one way by the Authors of such an imposition, does not at all priviledge the abuse of a liberty by others in the contrary extream.

2. The imposition they speak of is no necessary Cause of division and separation, or of the ill effect of them; and if it should be any occasion of them, yet there is a vast difference between the being an accidental occasion of division, and actually to divide and separate causlessly. And look how much the one is worse than the other,

other, by so much must the Dissenters be more in fault by their actual division and separation, than they can with any appearance of reason pretend the other to be, for the severity of their imposition.

Now that the imposition of the Liturgy is no necessary cause of division and separation, will appear in that the defects objected against it, are no sufficient cause of separation from the Worship performed, according to it : and this I hope I have made out to the satisfaction of any Man whose prejudice is not greater than his reason, in my inquiring into the nature of Schism among the following discourses. In which discourses I have endeavoured to remove those bars and stumbling-blocks out of the
Dis.

Dissenters way, which have kept them from Communion with our Parochial Congregations; and this with a design of ease to them as well as service to the Church otherways.

But this their narrowing and lessening the extent of the visible Church, and the terms of admission into it, and of sharing in the External priviledges of it; and likewise their confining the Administration of its Worship to one Circumstantial mode as only Lawful, when Almighty God has not done so, is of very pernicious consequence. For it has we see divided the Protestants among themselves; and cast them into Parties; and then engaged them in contentious Disputes one against another,

another, which has begot a kind of strangeness and shyness in them towards each other, yea and disaffection too; and the opposition begot upon this account rises still higher and higher, and more and more threatens ruine to both Parties, first and last. And the Papists themselves could never have contrived a more likely way to disgrace the Reformation, to lay low the Protestant interest, to enfeeble its strength, and to break down its fence, and make way for the return of Popery, than we our selves have taken by dividing our selves by needless and unreasonable scruples, and by making a Reformation of the Reformation as necessary as the first Reformation from Popery was, and for want

want of it, to make a second separation as necessary as the first: For what would or could they do more than separate, in case Popery were in place of Protestant Worship? And: however an emendation in some things of an Ecclesiastical concern may be very convenient and desirable when it can be had in a Legal way; yet to make this as necessary as the first Reformation from Popery was, and a separation from Parochial Communion for want of it, as necessary as our first separation from Popery was, is so unreasonable, that it is a marvelous thing that men of any reputation for Wisdom should not see it, and be full of the sense of it. And so it is likewise that they should run
so

So desparatè a hazzard as they do, of losing all the benefit they have of the National Reformation from Popery, rather than be denied or want that further Reformation as they esteem it, which they desire: And is it not marvelous also that they will not do what they can do toward preventing of it, by complying with publick Order as far as they can? For they themselves have given occasion to believe that very many, especially of the more knowing of them, can joyn in the Common Prayers made in our Parochial Assemblies, yea and more than so; however it comes to pass they refrain from doing so. And one would think the Apostles injunction; if it be possible, and as much as in you

you lies live peaceably with all men, should weigh more with them than any politick consideration whatsoever ; especially when the Publick Peace and Safety is so much concerned in it as it is, and as they know it is. It is hardly to be believed that they can think that not to comply as far as they can, should be a more likely way to come into their End, so far as it is fair and reasonable, than to do so is. God Almighty grant the things which belong to our Peace, may not still be hid from our Eyes.

I have been informed and do perceivē that many of the Dissenters can come to Church, but can-

[c]

not

not kneel in receiving the Sacrament; by reason whereof they are obnoxious to the Law, tho' they should come to Church. For whose help and satisfaction in this Case I shall here add a few words which were omitted in a more proper place. One reason of this scruple of theirs is taken from our Saviour and his Apostles using another gesture at the first Institution of the Lords Supper; But it must be considered,

1. That if the circumstances attending the first Institution of this Supper should oblige us to an imitation of them as well as in what is Essential to the Ordinance it self, then we may not receive it but in the Night, and after another Supper is first eaten,

eaten, and in the Gesture and Posture of lying upon Couches or Beds : for under those Circumstances it was first instituted and received. But now the different Practice of Christians in after times does declare ; That they have not held themselves obliged to imitate them in these Circumstances. Nor is there any reason they should ; because these things were but accidental to the Ordinance it self, and were all occasioned by this Supper, being instituted at the Paschal Supper, and from the Jews Gesture used therein according to the Custome of their Countrey. And the alteration of the Gesture does no more alter the Nature of the Ordinance, than the alteration of the other

Accidental Circumstances does.

2. *Scripture Examples* are not farther binding to us than they were agreeable to some Precept or Rule of Duty otherwise. But now there is no Precept enjoying any one Gesture to be used in receiving the Sacrament, as exclusive of any other, and therefore any may be made use of when required by the Government over us: for where there is no Law, there is no Transgression.

But if there had been any one Gesture required by our Saviour as necessary and as exclusive of others, no doubt but St. Paul would have made mention of it when he made known to the Church of Corinth what he had received from the Lord touching his

his Last Supper ; but we see no such thing was mentioned by him.

Chap. 11.

cept 3. The Jewish Church having bantered the Gesture in their eating in the Passeeover from what was used at the first institution of it ; our Saviour we see complied with and conformed to what was then become Customary in that Church: And if we do the like for the like reason, who can blame us for it without reproaching our Blessed Saviour.

Their other reason of their Scruple, is taken from the Papists having abused this Gesture of kneeling to Idolatry in worshipping the Bread by it ? for which cause they say we should not use it in receiving the Sacrament, least we

seem to sympolize with them therein. In Answer to this, several things are to be considered. As

1. *That tho' the Church of Rome doth strictly enjoyn kneeling at the Elevation of the Host, yet in the Act of Receivng it is not required by any Cannon or Constitution of theirs. Dr. John Burges, of great Note in his time, in his Treatise touching the Lawfulness of receivng the Sacrament kneeling, or in his Defence of the three Innocent Ceremonies, Chap. 21. pag. 67. and pag. 479. of his Rejoynder, as he is recited (for I have not his Book) hath these words. With us the Bishops or Ministers Communicate kneeling, as well as the People : But with the Papists,*

The Preface.

Mr

Papists, the Pope when himself performeth the Office, receiveth sitting as being a Type of Christ, the Mass Priests receive standing by the Canon of the Mass. For confirmation of all which he cites several Authors. He denies not but that the People receive kneeling, and says that the Priest did so too untill the Doctrine of Transubstantiation begot the Canon for his standing. But he denies that kneeling in the very time of receiving, was ever in the Church of Rome, any Rite of, or for Adoration of the Sacrament it self: and says, never any Pope enjoin'd it, nor is there any direction in the Mass for it, *The Reverend Dr. Stillingfleet*

hath asserted much to the same effect in his Unreasonableness of Separation. Pag. 15.

2. *How or after what manner soever kneeling has been abused by the Papists to bad purposes, yet the abuse of a thing otherwise lawful in it self, does not make the Use of it unlawful when separated from that abuse. Kneeling is abused by the Papists in their Prayers to the Virgin Mary, and other Saints, but this does not make the Use of kneeling unlawful in our Prayers to Almighty God.*

3. *Our receiving the Sacrament kneeling in compliance with Publick Order and Authority, can be no appearance or cause of Suspicion of Bread-Worship, because*

because the same Authority which requires our kneeling therein, has declared in the Rubrick at the end of the Office of Communion; That no Adoration is thereby intended, or ought to be done to the Bread and Wine, or to any Corporal Presence of Christs Natural Flesh and Blood, but is intended and meant for a signification and grateful Acknowledgement, of the benefits of Christ therein given. By this we see all appearance and suspicion of requiring kneeling in order to any Bread-Worship, is quite taken away.

4. *Standing is a Gesture of Adoration as well as kneeling, Mark xi. 25. and yet the Dissenters do not think it*

it Unlawful for that reason to receive the Sacrament standing. And if its being a Gesture of Adoration be no just exception against the Use of it in receiving the Sacrament, then the Adoration supposed or implied in the Gesture of kneeling, can be no just exception against the Use of that Gesture neither, in the performance of the same Duty.

5. Kneeling its being a Gesture of Adoration is so far from making the Use of it unlawful in receiving the Sacrament, as that it is the great reason why it is not unlawful but fit and convenient. For no good Christian will deny but that it highly becomes us inwardly to Adore our Blessed Saviour in the Act of
re-

The Preface. lvii

*receiving the Bread and Wine,
for his wonderful love in dying
for us, and for giving his Flesh
for the Life of the world, and if
so, then it cannot be incongruous
or unfit to express and signifie
this internal Act of Adoration,
by another that is external ; for
we are to Worship and Glorifie
him both in our Bodies and our
Spirits.*

*And now we think no man
who understands and considers
these things, should be able to
think it Unlawful to kneel in
receiving the Sacrament of the
Body and Blood of our Blessed
Saviour.*

T M E

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but*

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CATHOLICISM:

O R,

Several Enquiries touching the Nature and Extent of Visible Church-Membership and Communion, &c.



NOTIONS narrower than those which will hold Scripture-measure, concerning the Church, and what it is that makes men to be of it; and concerning Church-Communion, and what it is that qualifies men for it, have been the true reason and cause of our Church-Divisions and Separations in great part, where such notions have been entertained.

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2 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*

My present design therefore, which I intend to pursue in these Papers, is, to inquire into the true measure which the holy Scripture gives us of these things, that thereby we may the more steadily, and with the more certainty make a true Judgment of those separations in Church-Communion, which have been made and applauded by some.

I shall begin with what concerns the being of the Universal Church as Visible, and then inquire how, and by what means men become Members of it. After this, I shall inquire further what it is that qualifies men for, and which gives them a right to external Communion in this Church, as exercised in particular Congregations, and likewise into the nature of Catholick-communication and Schism, and the usefulness of National-Constitutions, for the furtherance of Christian Religion.

QUERY

QUERY I.

What is the true notion of the Universal Church as visible?

The Universal Church as Visible, is that Body, Company, or Society of People throughout the whole World, which consists of all such as are *Visibly Joyned or United to God in Christ as Head, by a Religious Bond.* And that which doth distinguish them from all other People in the World, is that *Relation* they bear to God different from that in which all other People stand related to Him. And this Relation is a *Religious* relation, by which they are brought nearer to God than all other People are. All other People are related as humane Creatures to God as their Creator and Governour; but these are related to him by another kind of Bond & Obligation, such as is *Spiritual and of a Religious Nature,* of which I am to say more afterward.

4 Of Visible Church-Membership,

~~And then~~ as this Relation is External and Visible, so that by which this Relation *is effected* and wrought, is something *Visible also*, which is the reason why the relation it self is said to be *Visible*.

Now the Persons thus Visibly Related to God in Christ, are not all Religiously Related to Him alike. Some of them are Related and United to him *Internally* and *Invisibly* by an Invisible Bond of Union over and besides their Visible Relation to him, by that which is visible: When as all the rest are Related to him only *Externally*; or if in any respect *Internally* also, yet not so, or by such a relation as will entitle them to the internal and best sort of priviledges of Gods People, such as Justification, Reconciliation, Pardon and Eternal life.

But yet this difference does not make this body of People which are externally one, by a Relation to God common to the whole, to become two Universal Churches: For *all* which *Essentially* belongs to the being of the Uni-

Universal Church, *is not limited* and restrained to that part of it, which in respect of its internal and invisible state does differ from, and excel the other; for the *External Relation* to God, *without which* the Universal Church does not exist, is common to the worser part of it as well as the better, by reason whereof, they cannot be two Churches, and are but one.

One part of the Visible Church differs from another indeed in respect of Internal and Invisible State before God; this is plain from the Scripture; But then it is as plain from thence, that as touching their External and Visible state, they are *one*, and that the same external priviledges belong to the one as to the other; of which more afterward.

We have not indeed the words *Visible* and *Invisible* used in Scripture, in reference to the two different states of men in one and the same Church; but yet we have those different states of them sufficiently revealed in Scrip-

6 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
ture, which we mean by those words.
I need not instance in Scriptures of
this nature, because they are suffici-
ently and commonly known, and I
shall have further occasion to mention
them afterward.

QUERY II.

*What is it which prepares or quali-
fies persons for that Relation to
God in Christ, which makes them Visible
Members of his Church?*

There is something *previous* to that,
by which the Relation in men to God
is wrought, which makes them Visi-
ble Members of his Church, and
which does capacitate them for it:
and that is their being *Externally call-
ed* by God to be of the true Reli-
gion: Persons are first to become
Disciples, before they be received into
the Church by Baptism; and their be-
coming Disciples, and their being
called, is the same thing. This is the
foun-

foundation in which that Relation is laid, and upon which that which does effect it, is built. And People are thus called, either

1. When they are *Converted* from a *false* Religion to own and profess the true: And thus the Pagans were called by the Preaching of the Apostles, when they were brought to be Disciples: Or,

2. When Almighty God causes them to be *Born*, and to be *Educated* in the true Religion, as those are who are born of Parents externally in Covenant with God. Thus the Jewish People from *Abrahams* time downward, were called to be Gods People, and to profess the true Religion. And accordingly they were stiled Gods called ones by the Prophet *Isa. 48. 12. Hearken to me, O Jacob, and Israel my called.* And how were they called? *Abrahams* indeed he was called *extraordinarily*, by God who appeared to him when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, *Act. 7. 2.* But his Posterity were called by being Born

8 Of Visible Church-Membership,

to, and educated in the same Religion which he himself was of; and so were his Childrens Children from Generation to Generation.

And thus has it been in calling Persons to be of the *Christian* Religion. At the first erection of the Church as *Christian*, men were *extraordinarily* called by the Preaching and Miracles of the Apostles and others; they were called and converted from the Pagan and Jewish Religion, to own the *Christian Religion*. • But since the times of first planting the Gospel up and down in the World, Gods *ordinary* and common method of calling men to the profession of the *Christian Religion* has been by their *Christian Parents educating* them in it. And indeed their being born of Parents in an especial Relation to God, is in it self a *Providential Call* which qualifies them for the priviledge of being so related also. For upon that account they are both in the Old Testament and the New, stiled a *holy Seed*, that is, a Seed separated from the Infidel World

World to God: And by this the Females of the Jews became Church-Members, and by this were their Males qualifi'd to enter into Covenant with God by Circumcision, at eight days old. But of these things further mention will be made in the process of our Inquiries.

QUERY III.

What may that be by which People are made Visible Church-Members?

That by which People are constituted compleatly Visible Church-Members, *is a mutual Covenanting between God and them, between Christ and his Visible Members.* In which Covenant, God on his part, promiseth to be their God in Christ, to pardon them, and to confer eternal life on them, upon condition they take him only for their God, and Christ Jesus for their Lord and Saviour, by believing in him, and obeying him. And
men

to *Of Visible Church-Membership*,
men on ~~their~~ part Covenant to per-
form the *Condition* of Gods Covenant
in taking him for their God, and Christ
for their Lord and Saviour, by be-
lieving in him, and obeying him.
Those words, *I will be to them a God,*
and they shall be to me a People, contain
the substance of the Covenant of Sal-
vation, both on Gods part, and mans
part, *Heb. 8. 10.* The mutual Cove-
nant between God and his *Israel* of
old is thus described: *Thou hast a-*
vouched this day the Lord to be thy
God, and to walk in his ways, and to
keep his Statutes, and his Command-
ments and his judgments, and to hearken
to his Vo. ce. And the Lord hath a-
vouched thee this day to be his peculiar
People, as he hath promised thee, and
that thou shouldst keep all his Command-
ments, Deut. 26. 17, 18.

This mutual Covenanting is the
Copulative, or Bond by which the con-
junction is made between the Head
and his Members; Christ and his Body
the Church: For the nature of it, is
to *Unite* the Parties Covenanting, and
to

to convey a mutual interest in each other. *I entred into Covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine*, saith God, Ezek. 16. 8. And this tying or knitting together by Covenant, is called the *Bond of the Covenant*, Ezek. 20. 37. I might multiply places, to shew, that mens being *joyned* to the Lord in the common notion of Scripture, is by *Covenanting* with him to be his People. Thus Jer. 50. 5. *Come let us joyn our selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant, never to be forgotten.* Also Isa. 56. 6. *The Sons of the Stranger, that joyn themselves to the Lord, to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his Servants, every one that taketh hold of my Covenant, &c.*

That this Union is thus made by Contract and Covenant between God and men, we may the rather believe, and the more easily conceive, because the Holy Scripture delights to resemble and illustrate the Union between God and his People, Christ and his Church, by the Union that is between Men and their Wives, which
is

12 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*

is an Union by mutual Contract and Covenanting, the one to take the Woman for his Wife, the other to take the man for her Husband, with promise to deport themselves towards each other, according to the nature of the mutual relation between them, *Ephes. 5. 28: Isa. 54. 5. Jer. 31. 31. Hos. 2. 19.* And those who were *Strangers to the Covenants of promise*, were said to be *without God, and without Christ*; that is not related to him, nor he to them, as his Church and People, *Ephes. 2. 12.*

And here let it be observed and remembered once for all, that the same thing which Unites men to Christ, Unites them to those also who are already one with him by Covenant. Union with the Head, is the Reason of Union with all those Members which make the body of that head; like as a man by becoming a Covenant Servant to a Master, becomes a Member of that Family, and a Fellow-servant to all the rest of the Servants of that Master.

QUERY

QUERY IV.

How and when is the Covenant between God and men entred into, by which People are externally United to Christ, and visibly made Members of his Church?

This Covenanting is transacted when People are *Baptized*. For Baptism is a Sacred Rite instituted by Christ, by which the Covenant we speak of, is solemnly entred into.

As for Almighty God, he has prevented men on his part, in Covenanting with them, and stands openly declared in his Word, to be a God to all those, to pardon and savethem, whoever they be, that shall become a People unto him, by believing in him, and serving him: And not only so, but he has also *Authorized* his Ministers to transact with men in his Name, according to that declaration, by bringing them into Covenant with him by Baptism,

14 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*

Baptism, and thereby to receive them into his Church : For to that end are the *keys* of the Kingdom of Heaven delivered to them, *viz.* to open the door, and to let such into the Church ; and this they do as Stewards of God's House.

Now whenever men take hold on this Covenant of God, and openly and publickly Covenant with him to become a People unto him, and to perform the condition of his Covenant with them, in order to the obtaining the benefits promised on his part, then and by that means is their visible Relation to God, to Christ, and to his Church, constituted and made. And all this a being visibly Baptized in his Name, doth imply.

For this I conceive is the meaning of their being Baptized into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *Mat. 28. 19.* Not only that they are Baptized *in* their name, as that signifies its being done by their *Authority*, but also *into* their name, as that signifies their being brought into a *special* Relation

Relation to them as their God, whom they Covenant to worship and serve. And therefore from thenceforth they are called by that name into which they are Baptized ; like as a Wife is called by the name of her Husband, from that very moment in which the Marriage-Covenant is compleated, *Isa. 4. 1.*

Hence it is that *S. Paul* teacheth, *That as many as have been Baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, Gal. 3. 27.* For by that they put on his Name, and put on their Relation to him. For this *Visible Membership* we speak of, is nothing else but a *Visible Relation* to Christ the Head of Christians, and to all those that are visibly related to him. By Baptism they are *planted* into Christ, *Rom. 6.* which is another metaphor by which our External Union with Christ by Baptism is signified. And by it they are *Baptized into one body*, *1 Cor. 12. 13.*

Those words of *St. Peter* shew likewise that there was a Covenanting with God in Baptism, when he says,
The

16 Of Visible Church-Membership,

The like figure whereunto Baptism doth now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good Conscience towards God, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 3. 21. I find that which is here translated, *The answer of a good Conscience,* is rendred by others, the *promise* or *stipulation* of a good Conscience, and by some the *question* or *questioning* of a good Conscience. Now if the Greek will bear or countenance these several readings, *Answer, Stipulation, Questioning,* yet the matter may be thus well accommodated. The Answer of a good Conscience here spoken of, was an answer to somewhat proposed, or put questionwise to be resolved, or answered to by them, who were to be Baptized; and that the Answer to it, was of the nature of a Promise, Stipulation or Covenant, in reference to God. As when it was proposed, or put questionwise to the party to be Baptized, whether he did believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, and Saviour of the World? and whether he

he would reform his sinful life, and in hope of Salvation by Jesus Christ, henceforth live unto God according to his teaching in the Gospel : The answer to this was assertory and promissory Covenant-wise made, *viz.* that he did so believe, and that through Gods assistance he would so reform, and so live ; to the performance whereof he *bound himself* by being Baptized in his name.

Now when such a promissory answer as this proceeded from such a frame of mind as did produce, or would produce effects sutable to such an answer or undertaking ; it might very well be called the answer of a good Conscience towards God. And St. *Peter* might well say, as here we suppose he does, That the entrance into the Church by Baptism, when accompanied with this answer of a good Conscience , would as certainly be Salvation to them through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, as ever *Noah* & his Families entrance into the Ark, was the means of their escaping perish-

C ing

18 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
ing by water, that being the figure to
which St. Peter here likens Baptism.

And this way and method of bringing Persons into the Visible Church as *Institutive*, by Covenanting with God in Baptism, does but answer to what was done in *Abrahams* days and after, for the gathering God a Visible Church out of the World; for that was done by Circumcision then, which is done by Baptism now. For it was the *Sacred Rite* of entering Persons into Covenant with God, to take God for their God, and to be his People, and for that reason it is called *the Covenant of Circumcision*, by St. Stephen, Act. 7. And it was the badge by which they were marked and differenced from others as belonging to God by Covenant, and is therefore said to be the *token* of the Covenant between God and them, Gen. 17. 11. And just so is Baptism now, which is come in the room of Circumcision.

We see then how excellently the Old and New Testament agree in this point :

and National Constitutions. 19

point : That ever since God has had a Visible Church on Earth by *Institution*, he has made the way and means of becoming Members of it to be a Covenanting with him by an initiating Ordinance.

QUERY V.

H*OW can Infants become Visible Church-Members by Covenanting with God, since they seem naturally incapable of doing such a thing while Infants ?*

This Inquiry seems necessary in this place upon occasion of the resolution of the former Query. That the Infants of the Circumcised were to be engaged to God Covenant-wise by being Circumcised, is past dispute. But then there will another question arise, and that is, whether they were so by their own act and deed, or by the act and deed of their Parents ?

20 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*

We cannot say that they were in their own Persons *active* in Covenanting with God; and that therefore it must needs be by the act and deed of their Parents, that they were by Circumcision engaged to God Covenant-wise. But then yet a further question will arise, and that is, whether those Infants were *obliged* by their Parents entering them into Covenant by Circumcising them, before they were in a capacity of *consenting to it*?

And the Answer is, that there can be no doubt but that they were, supposing they were obliged at all, which none deny but they were. The Children were obliged by what their Parents did in their Minority on their behalf, with a purpose to oblige them, supposing the thing lawful. This was a thing commonly understood among the Jews, and taken for granted, and as it appears, was so accounted by God also. I will give some instances of both.

1. The Jews did so esteem it, and that appears by what they did to oblige

lige their Seed after them to observe the days of Purim: *Esther 9. 27. The Jews ordained and took upon them, and upon their Seed; and upon all such as joyned themselves unto them, so as it should not fail that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year: and that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every Generation, every Family, every Province, and every City, and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the remembrance of them perish from their Seed.* So again, *1 Sam. 20. 42. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, for as much as we have sworn both of us in the Name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my Seed and thy Seed for ever.*

2. Almighty God did account and hold the Children obliged by what their Parents did, or had done on their behalf, with an intent to oblige them. For proof of this, I will instance in several cases.

22 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*

First, the Lord did hold the Children and Posterity of the *Jews* to be obliged by that Covenant which their Fore-fathers had made with the *Gibeonites* in the days of *Joshua*. For there was three years of Famine sent by God in the days of *David*, for that *Saul* and his House had slain the *Gibeonites*, contrary to the Covenant which their Fore-fathers had made with them, tho it was several hundreds of years before, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1.

Secondly, The whole Congregation of *Israel*, Men, Women, and *their little ones* entred into Covenant with God, by his appointment, in the *Land of Moab*, Deut. 29. 10, 11, 12, 13. *Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God-----your little Ones and your Wives-----that thou shouldest enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God.* And it must be by the act of their Parents since, or some in their stead, that *their little Ones* did so, by obliging them as much as in them lay, to observe and keep that Covenant when they should come to years of discretion

tion to understand it. For it is not easie to understand how the little Ones that were but Infants, could otherwise enter into Covenant with God. And if not, then we see from this instance likewise, that God did account the little Children obliged by what their Parents did on their behalf with an intent to oblige them. Which is yet farther confirmed from what is said in the 14. and 15. verses, in these words. *Neither with you only do I make this Covenant, and this Oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day;* meaning their Posterity yet to come, as is generally understood. For it seems that God did intend to oblige the Posterity to come, to take him for their God, by bringing their Fore-fathers into Covenant with him. Hence it is that the *Jews* defection to Idolatry is aggravated thus; *They rejected his Statutes and his Covenant which he made with their Fathers,* 2 King. 17. 15.

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And in this 29. of Deut. 25. *Then shall men say, because they have forsaken the Covenant of the Lord God of their Fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the Land of Egypt, &c.* How could that have aggravated their crime, in not observing the Covenant consented to by their Fore-fathers, unless they their Posterity had been obliged by their Fore-fathers consenting to it?

Thirdly, God calls those Children of Idolatrous Jews, *his Children*, whom they Sacrificed to their Idols, and says, *they were born unto him*, Ezek. 16. 20, 21. & 23. 37. And upon what account were they so, but by being the Children of Parents in Covenant with God, tho now they had violated it, and by being farther brought into Covenant with God by their Parents Circumcising them? It seems that Covenant which had obliged the Parents to be Gods, obliged those that were born of them to be so likewise, and much more were they thus obliged, when their Parents had brought

brought them into Covenant with God by Circumcising them. Tho such Parents had forfeited their Covenant-*interest* in God, yet they had not by that, by which they did so, made void Gods Covenant-*right* to them and their Children, but that they were still under an Obligation to him to be his. Upon which account it is, as it is probable, that God is called the God of some men, when yet they have been very bad, as we may see, 1 *King.* 15. 3. 2 *King.* 16. 2. 2 *Chron.* 28. 5. & 36. 5. 12.

Fourthly, It was the Parents that Circumcised their Children of eight days old, and not the Children themselves; and yet these Children were as firmly obliged by it, when grown to be men, as if they had then Circumcised themselves. *I testifie again to every man that is Circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law, saith St. Paul,* Gal. 5. 3.

And if they were obliged by what their Parents did in Circumcising them, to perform the duty on their part,

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part, whenever they were capable of it; we may well conceive that by what their Parents did in entring them into Covenant by Circumcising them, they were invested with the benefit promised on Gods part, until they devested themselves of it by their actual and wilful transgressing the Covenant, in not becoming a People unto God, in correspondence to his Promise of being a God unto them.

And the truth is according to Scripture account, little Children, which were devoted to the Service of God by their Parents, and designed to be trained up to it, were by a favourable construction reputed to be doers of that Service while but little Children, which they could not actually perform until they were past their Child-hood. This is plain and expresse in one case, and by parity of reason, must be allowed in other under like circumstances. The Children of the *Koathites*, of a month old, were said to *keep the charge of the Sanctuary*

Sanctuary, because they were designed and devoted for it by their Parents then, tho they could not actually perform that Service until they attained unto more years, *Numb. 3. 27, 28. These are the Families of the Koathites, in the number of all the Males from a month old and upwards, were eight thousand and six hundred, keeping the charge of the Sanctuary.* And the contrary practice of Parents was accompanied with a contrary event in their Children: If they did not devote their Children to the Service of God by Circumcising them when they should, their Children were reputed breakers of the Covenant, whereas their Parents properly were so, by neglecting to fulfil the terms of it on their Childrens behalf. *The Uncircumcised Man-child, whose flesh of his fore-skin is not Circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his People; he hath broken my Covenant, Gen. 17. 14.*

And thus were the little Children of Profelytes also made parties in
Gods

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Gods Covenant by their Fathers taking hold of it, and by entering their Male-Children with themselves into it by Circumcision, *Exod. 12. 48.*

Nor is it at all unreasonable that the Children should be obliged by what their Parents did to that end in their Minority, so long as it was in nothing but what the Children ought then to have obliged themselves to, if they had been capable to have done so, and which in duty they ought to oblige themselves to, when come to years of discretion, if their Parents had not done it for them before. Parents, as Parents, have so great an Interest and Propriety in their Children, and so great Authority over them, and Power of disposing of them, that what they oblige them to by their act and deed, will, and command, in their Minority, they ought in duty to observe and do; if the things be not unreasonable in themselves, nor countermanded by God, as having a greater Interest in them,
and

and Authority over them than their Parents had. This is so reasonable, as that we see God himself approves of it, and has founded his own Institution upon it, of obliging little Children by Covenanting with him by the act and deed of their Parents. If a man by his Will and Testament, oblige his Son and Heir to any thing which is fair and reasonable, it is a dishonourable thing among men for such a Child to esteem himself not obliged thereby to do it. *If it be but a mans Covenant or Testament, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth it,* saith S. Paul, Gal. 3. 15.

And thus we see how little Children become obliged in Covenant with God, and visible Members of his Church, by the act and deed of their Parents on their behalf, both before the Law of *Moses* and under it.

Let us now consider whether the little Children of Christians under the New Testament, be not brought to Covenant with God, and made members of the visible Church by the
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30 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
the act and deed of their Parents, as well, and as much as others had been in times of the Old Testament.

It cannot be denied but that Christian-Parents have as great a Propriety in, and as much Authority over their Children now, as ever Parents had under the Law : And if so, they must needs be in the same capacity of obliging their little Children by their act and deed on their behalf, in any thing that is for their benefit, as they were. Nor is it less the duty of Children now to be obliged by what their Parents do in their Minority on their behalf for their benefit, than it was then. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother,* is of as much force to Children now, as ever it was in Old Testament times. These things are clearly seen by the light of nature. And now we deny not but that it is as much the duty of Parents now, to seek the good of their Children, by doing that for them in their Minority, which tends to their benefit, as ever it was heretofore.

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All things being supposed it must be granted, that Parents are in as good a capacity to oblige their little Children to God in Covenant now, by what they may do on their behalf in their Minority, as ever Parents were heretofore. They may dedicate and devote them to God and his Service by Baptism now, as well as Parents could by Circumcision heretofore. And Baptism does as much oblige the Baptized in Covenant with God now, as ever Circumcision did the Circumcised heretofore. And it is now as much the benefit of Persons to be obliged in Covenant with God in their Infancy by Baptism, as ever it was for others formerly by Circumcision.

Now as touching that Warrant or Authority which Christians have to oblige their Infant Children by Baptizing them, to become parties in Gods Covenant, and to perform the terms and condition of it on their part, as they grow up into a capacity of being active therein, I shall compare
what

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what of this kind Christians have, with what *Abraham* and his Seed, and others had for their obliging their Children to be a People unto God by Circumcising them. *Abraham* and his Seed had an expresse command for it, but the Gentiles, which were not of *Abrahams* natural Seed, had only a favourable allowance and grant, that in case any of them had a mind to joyn themselves to the Jewish Church, and

to have communion with
Exod. them in the way of worship
12.48. prescribed them, that then in order to this attainment, the

Father, or Man himself was to be Circumcised, and all his Males. But otherwise, as Circumcision was not enjoined the Gentiles, so we do not find that any Prophet or other, were sent abroad among them, to draw them into the Jewish Church; only we read indeed that the Pharisees compassed Sea and Land to make one Profelyte, but its probable it was but from among other Jews, to make him of their Sect, to strengthen their party. But

But when the Visible Church was to become Christian, our Saviour commissioned his Apostles *to go into all the World, and to disciple all Nations, and Baptize them.* Now if this commissioning extended to the Baptizing the little Children of Christian Parents, as well as the Christian Parents themselves; then here is Warrant and Authority enough for such Parents to engage their Children by Baptizing them in Covenant with God, and to oblige them to perform the terms of it when they shall be capable of endeavouring to do so.

And that this Commission of our Saviour did extend to the Authorizing the Apostles to Baptize such little Children, I have endeavoured to make out in another discourse which I shall not here repeat, but refer the Reader to it. [*Address from p. 29. to p. 80.*] The substance of what is there said, is reducible to these two heads.

I. To shew what reason the Apostles had to understand the words

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34 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
of their Commission to Baptize in
this Latitude.

2. What reason we have to believe that they did understand the words of their Commission in this extensive sense, and that they did practice accordingly.

Unto what I have said there, I shall here add one very considerable reason to induce us to believe that the Apostles did Baptize the little Children of Christians, taken from the unanimous agreement of all Christians in all parts of the World, in the practice of Baptizing Infants in the purer times of the Church, and before the defection into Popery. Now there are some things which render it *morally impossible*, that there should be such an unanimous agreement in such a practice, unless they had it from the Apostles, or others sent by them, in their first planting of Christianity in those places.

The Apostles went into all the World to Preach the Gospel, and were our Saviours *Witnesses unto t*

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uttermost parts of the earth, according to his Commission. Their sound went into all the Earth, and their words unto the ends of the World: The Gospel was

Rom. 10.

Col. 1. 6.

23.

Preached to every Creature under Heaven, as St. Paul saith. There are some things which make it morally impossible that there should be such an universal agreement as aforesaid in all places, upon any other account, or for any other reason than their first receiving this practice of Baptizing Infants, from the Apostles, in their first planting of Christianity there. As

1. The vast distance of one place from another, where the Christians lived, made it morally impossible they should come into this usage by combination, or imitation of one another.

2. The diversity of their Languages made it impossible that this sameness of practice should grow out of any mutual correspondence, or intelligence held by them.

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3. If these things had not made it impossible, and if it could be supposed that the Christians in all parts, notwithstanding their distance of place, and diversity of Language, might have held such correspondence as by agreement to have introduced such a practice as they had not from the Apostles, but had been imposed upon them at first by some *Innovators*; yet it is morally impossible it should steal into all Churches, and every where, without some *known opposition* from some good men or other, if it had not been Apostolical.

We cannot with any reason think that all Christians both in office, and out of office in the Church, would have suffered such an Innovation as this (if it had been an Innovation) without such considerable opposition as would have been taken notice of by some Author or other, who lived in or near such time in which it had been first brought into the Church.

Since then no man is able to assign the beginning of this practice short o
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the Apostles times : And since the whole world of Christians were agreed in it, in the purest times of the Church, for ought appears to the contrary : And since all Christians, how much soever they have differed in other things, have yet all along agreed in this, as much as they have in the observation of the Lords day, a very few only excepted, and those chiefly, or rather only, as have appeared since *Luthers* days, or the *beginning* of the *Reformation* : And since the Apostles practice recorded in Scripture of their Baptizing whole Households, gives us ground to believe they practised the same in all places where they have been, and that their doing so, was the reason and ground of the universal practice of Baptizing Infants in all Churches first planted by them, and in those succeeding them : I say all these things considered, there remains little reason for any impartial man to doubt, but that the Apostles did practise Infant Baptism

QUERY VI.

Whether in the Baptizing of Children, that method of proceeding be not most proper, by which the Children are most directly made to enter into Covenant with God by their Parents?

The reason of this Query arises out of the matters discussed in the two former. For if that Union and Relation between God and men, by which they become Members of his Visible Church, is made by entering into Covenant with him, to be his People, as he with them to be their God: And if little Children are obliged in Covenant with God, by what their Parents do in causing them to be Baptized with intent thereby so to oblige them; then I propose it to be considered, whether it will not thence follow that it is most proper to demand of the Parents, whether
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in bringing their Children to be Baptized, they do not intend thereby to dedicate them to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and to engage them as much as in them lies, to be Gods faithful Servants, and to believe and live according to the Doctrine and Precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ? or somewhat to that effect. And whether likewise such Answers from the Parents should not be expected, as are most suitable to such demands?

And further, it would be considered, Whether Infants can be so well, or so directly and properly obliged to God in Covenanting with him in Baptism, by what Sponsors, which are not their Parents, then do to oblige them, as they may by what their Parents themselves may do to that end.

And the reason of this proposal or question is this: If the Childrens being obliged to do that when they come to Age, which Parents obliged them to in their Baptism, does depend upon their Parents properly in them, and

40 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
and authority over them, as is supposed it does from what has been formerly argued; then they cannot be so properly obliged by what other Sponsors do in their behalf at their Baptism, which have no such property in them, or authority over them.

It is true indeed, Parents are not wholly unconcerned in entering their Children into Covenant with God by Baptism, when yet Sponsors act in the Parents stead: For it is the Parents that cause their Children to be Baptized, and what the Sponsors act, is by the Parents procurement; and upon these accounts it is interpretatively their act: But yet Parents immediately, and in their own persons acting the part of entering their Children into Covenant, seems more proper and better to answer the nature of the thing. Sponsors may be more useful in case Parents of Children to be Baptized are dead, as possibly it might be the case of some Children, whose Parents were Martyr'd in the
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Primitive times, from which perhaps that usage in the Church took its first rise. There are other cases in which Sponsors or Pro-parents may be useful and necessary, but hardly so as to exclude Parents from their proper work.

But I speak of these things with submission to those of better judgment and more authority, having only offered them to consideration.

QUERY VII.

For what reason is Church-Membership said to be Invisible as well as Visible in some, and yet but only as Visible in others? And from whence does this difference arise?

This difference proceeds from the difference there is between Visible and Invisible Christianity, and from the different Union between Christ the Head, and his Members which is used thereby.

By

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By invisible Christianity, I mean those inward acts and affections of soul, by which men *abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good*, which are wrought by a serious assent of the mind unto the truth of the doctrine and great motives of the Gospel, by which they are convinced of the necessity of repentance and holy living, in order to their escaping everlasting misery, and becoming eternally happy.

By visible Christianity, I mean external and visible acts of Religion, in reference both to God and men; such as is the *profession* of the God that made the World, to be the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, to be his Son, and the rest of the Articles of the Christian Faith, and such other acts as consist in an external performance of the external acts of worship due to this God and Saviour, and in acts of Justice and Charity towards men, and in sobriety of behaviour in reference to a mans self.

Now

Now by the internal and invisible Christianity forementioned, in conjunction with that which is external, the Covenant entred into in Baptism, is so performed, that by it a man is internally and invisibly united to Christ, and consequently to all those who are invisibly one with him. But visible Christianity alone, is but an external performance of the Covenant entred into in Baptism; and this amounts to no more than an external and visible Union with Christ, and with his Church as visible. By this much then we may understand wherein the difference between visible and invisible Church-membership lies, and from whence it doth arise.

Now that the internal Christianity which consists in an internal change in the faculties of the soul, to wit, in their apprehension, inclination, motions and operations in reference to their various objects of good and evil, does produce or obtain an internal and invisible Union of men with the

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the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, will appear if we consider these things.

1. This internal Renovation of soul contains in it an Union with God by *adhesion*; for by it a man doth with his heart and soul, and out of judgment and choice, *cleave* unto the Lord: which in the sense of Scripture is a being *joyned to him*. *He that is joyned, or he that cleaveth unto the Lord, is one spirit*; for it is rendred by both words, 1 Cor. 6. 17. And for a man firmly and resolvedly to adhere and stick to the Lord, and to the interest of his honour and glory in the world, in worshipping, loving, and obeying him, and in placing his affiance in him, as his only God and Saviour, come what will (which is his cleaving to him) is such a moral *Union* with God, as the nature of man is capable of.

2. This internal Renovation worketh an invisible Union with God, by *a participation of the divine nature*, as the Apostle phraseth it, 2 Pet. I. 4.

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By which participation, men are morally united to God. For they are thereby renewed to the Image of God, in Knowledge, Righteousness, and Holiness, and so are made one Spirit, or one in spirit with Him, according to that of the Apostle in 1 Cor. 6. 17. *He that is joyned to the Lord is one spirit*, or of one spirit. For so far as such an one is partaker of the Divine nature by Renovation, he judgeth of good and evil, as God judgeth, and loves and hates, and designs the same things that he doth.

3. By this Renovation of the Inner man, men come to have the same Spirit of God, and of Christ, to *reside and dwell in them*, by which their *Union* with the Father and the Son, is compleated. The holy Spirit first prepares them as living Temples, or an Habitation for himself to dwell in, by renewing them in a less degree, and then comes and takes up his abode, and dwells in them, by affording them a more constant, and more plentiful

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tiful influence and assistance. And
the same Spirit dwelling both in
Christ and in them, the *Union* be-
tween them becomes more intimos
and more entire. *Hereby we know that*
we dwell in him, and he in us, because
he hath given us of his Spirit, 1 John
4. 13. As the Union of all the mem-
bers of a natural Body is not made
so much by their contiguity or close
joyning, as by being all animated by
one and the same spirit which is in all
the parts; so it is in the Union of the
Head and Members of the Mystical
Body, Christ and the Church, and e-
very particular Member of it; for
they are united by the quickening
power and influence of the same
Spirit which abides both in the head
and all the members.

By what hath been said touching
the Invisible *Union* between Christ
and his Church as Invisible, it will
be easie to discern whence and for
what reason it is that many who are
really Members of the Church as Vi-
ble, are yet no more but such, and not
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at all of the Church as Invisible. And it is for want of such an inward change of the mind and will, and all the affections of the soul, in reference to sin and duty, good and evil, as is made by a vigorous assent of the mind to the great truths of the Gospel, and the mighty motives of it, and by a serious and frequent consideration of them, and how a mans own self is concerned in them in point of happiness or misery, according as he yields up himself to be governed by them, or refuses to do so.

I do not deny but that such who are Members of the Church, but only as it is Visible, may yet in some sort really assent unto the truth of what the Gospel reveals, touching Christ, his being the Son of God, and Saviour of Sinners; yea, touching the necessity of Repentance, in order to the obtaining the pardon of Sin and Eternal Life by his sufferings. I doubt not but that these may in some sort believe, and undisssemblingly profess to believe otherwise concerning the

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the Christian doctrine, than profess'd Infidels do; tho not so seriously and effectually as the truly Regenerate. We cannot say they properly dissemble, whom they profess to believe the Christian doctrine; or Articles of the Christian faith: We cannot say their words are knowingly contrary to the sentiment of their minds and thoughts in such a profession. We see by experience that some Sea-faring men otherwise vicious in their lives, yet when taken Captive by Infidels, will endure any hardship, rather than be drawn to say they do not believe the Christian doctrine; which is a good evidence that they do in some sense really believe it, tho perhaps not so effectually as the truly Regenerate do. There were many in our Saviours days, of whom the Scripture says that they did believe in Christ, whose faith yet was not powerful enough to Regenerate them. And such was *Simon Magus* also; and such were those who as *St. James* supposed had faith, and yet not justified by it, it being

Being *alone*, and but a *dead faith*; and such faith is the faith; as may justly be feared of many at this day, who are Christians by profession, and of the Visible Church.

Nay farther, I do not deny but that this faith of theirs in conjunction with some external motives, may produce a form of Godliness, so that they may do most of the *external* acts of Religion which Regenerate men do. They may enter into Covenant with God in Baptism, and worship him only, and in the name of Christ: They may openly own the Articles of the Christian faith, and with zeal dispute for them. They may frequent the Ordinances of publick worship; such as Prayer, hearing the Word, and the Lords Supper, and may observe the Lords day. They may be free from gross and scandalous sins, do many acts of justice in their dealing with men, and give Alms also. They may be thus outwardly Righteous and externally Religious, and yet be unrenewed as touching the inward man.

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50 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*

They may for all this be full of Envy, Malice, Hatred, and Revengeful thoughts, of Emulation, Wrath, and Pride; of Ambition, Covetousness, and Inordinate affection; which are sins of that sort which the Apostle calls *works of the flesh*, and such as exclude men out of the Kingdom of Heaven. And while they remain thus unrenew'd in their minds and wills; what ever faith or repentings they may otherwise have, or whatever their outward performances may be, yet they fall short of being of the Invisible Church, for want of that inward renovation that invisibly unites men to Christ.

But yet tho this external Christianity fore-mentioned will not make men Members of the Church Invisible, yet it will evidence and declare them to be of the Church as visible, and continue them in it. For it is in some sort (tho but partial indeed) an external performance of the Covenant of Baptism, by which they had their first enterance into the Visible Church,
and

and by which their external relation to God in a religious sense, was first constituted. It is in respect of external Christianity, that such are said to be in Christ; who yet are but unfruitful branches (*John 15.*) devoid of that fruit which is called the *fruit of the spirit*, which consists of those internal qualifications described in *Gal. 5. 22, 23.* And their being *in Christ*, signifies an external *Union* between them, which is made by external Christianity: And in such an external respect, the whole multitude of the Children of *Israel*, who did not violate the bond of the Covenant between God and them; by running into idolatry, were said to *cleave* unto the Lord, which is another word which signifies their being Joynted or United to him; which can be understood but of an external Union by external Religion, in reference to many of them at least. Thus in *Dent. 4. 3, 4.* it is said, *All the men that followed Baal-peor, the Lord thy God hath destroy'd them from among you: but ye*

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that did cleave unto the Lord your God, are alive every one of you this day. Where we see their continuing to worship the God of *Israel* in the use of his Ordinances, without following *Baal-peor* as some others did, is called their *cleaving* unto God. And by that they continued their relation unto God uninterrupted. But of this I shall have occasion to say more in the next inquiry.

Thus we see that it is visible Christianity that makes men to be of the Visible Church, and Invisible Christianity which makes them to be of the Church as Invisible. Those that have visible Christianity, are thereby differenced from the Infidel and Idolatrous World on the one hand, and by their having no more, they are differenced from the Invisible Church on the other, and thereby set in a middle state between both, and that is in the Visible Church.

QUERY

QUERY VIII.

Whether men are no otherwise Members of the Church as Visible, than as they are Reputed Members of the Church as Invisible?

Those of the Congregational way, whether called *Independents*, or *Anabaptists*, have been wont strongly to adhere to the Negative of this question, *That men are not otherwise Members of the Church as Visible, than as they are reputed of the Church as Invisible.* And it is upon the authority of this Hypothesis, that they refuse to admit any to Church-Communion, but such in whom in their judgment, are found evidences or signs of Invisible Church-Membership or saving Grace: That none but such have right to Communion in the instituted Ordinances of worship.

54 *Of Visible Church-Membership,
That particular Churches are Constituted
or to be Constituted only of such.*

But others do think that these do make the Visible Church much narrower than the Scriptures do : and do hold that all that are visibly in Covenant with God, are thereby joyned in Relation to him, and are made Members of his Visible Church, as well those which have no saving grace as those that have. Our business then for the present will be to consult the Scriptures in this case.

Before God had a Church in the World by *Institution*, mans visible relation to God was known by their worshipping of *him only*, whether they had any other signs of saving grace or no, and tho they were in no visible Covenant with him. They were known to whom they did belong, by whom they worshipped : *Every man walked in the name of his God*, as the Prophet speaks, *Mica. 4. 5.* and those that worshipped a strange God, were *the Children of a strange God*, (*Mal. 2. 11.*) as those that worshipped

shipped the true God, were counted his Children. Natural Religion, especially in point of worship, was then the measure of judging mens visible relation to God.

But when Almighty God was pleased to set on foot, and begin the gathering him a Visible Church out of the rest of the World in a way of divine *Institution*, he laid the foundation of it in his transaction with *Abraham*, by instituting and ordaining two things.

1. That as God by Covenant engaged to *Abraham* to be his God, and the God of his Seed, so *Abraham* and his Seed must engage to God by Covenant to be his Servants, and a People unto him.

2. That this Covenant should be entred into by *Abraham* and his Seed, by observing such a Sacred Rite as God instituted and appointed for that purpose, and that was *Circumcision*. And this was continued for this use, until the *Messias* came and instituted *Baptism*, another Sacred

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Rite for the same end. Now in Gods thus founding his Visible Church, there was no such thing as the appointing saving Grace in the judgment of charity, to be the condition of mens admission into his Church by Circumcision : But the Lord absolutely commanded that *Abraham* and his Male Seed after him, and all Born in the House, or bought with their money, should be Circumcised without any limitation or condition in reference to the appearance of saving Grace. By which it is evident that God did not design to have no others of his Visible Church than such as had saving Grace.

Now the Posterity of *Abraham*, when they came out of *Egypt*, were by virtue of their Covenanting with God, all of them bad as well as good, visibly related to God as his People; and so his as no other people were. And I hope we may safely say, that *God himself accounted them to be*, what *Moses* and others by *divine inspiration* said they were. And if so, then we
may

may say, that Almighty God did account them all bad as well as good (tho not in the most emphatical sence) to be his *chosen* elected and adopted People (Deut. 4. 37. Rom. 9. 4.) *his Called*, (Isa. 48. 12.) *a People near unto him* (Psal. 148. 14.) *his Saints his holy People*, (Deut. 7. 6. & 33. 3. Psal. 50. 5.) *his Children* (Deut. 14. 1.) *a special and peculiar People unto himself*, (Deut. 7. 6. & 14. 2.) *his Inheritance*, (Deut. 9. 29.) *his Portion*, (Deut. 32. 9.) *his peculiar Treasure*, Psal. 135. 4.

All these Titles and Appellations given them by God, or by man inspired by God in giving them, do with as much plainness as words can express, shew, that God himself owned them for his People, his Children, and related to him in such a sence as other People not in Covenant with him, were not.

Now that they were not thus called or accounted for any such reason as because they had saving grace, or because they were reputed to be of the Church

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Church as Invisible, will appear with full evidence. For the same inspired Man *Moses*, at the same time, and in the same Book, in and by which God owned them for his People under many of the foresaid appellations, did from God charge them with such and so much guilt, as no man can with any colour of reason say was consistent with an Invisible Church-State.

Thus in *Deut. 9. Thou art a stiff-necked People*, vers. 6. *From the day thou didst depart out of the Land of Egypt, even until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord*, vers. 7. *They have corrupted themselves, they have quickly turned aside*, vers. 12. *I have seen this People, and behold it is a stiff-necked People*. vers. 13. *You have been Rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you*, vers. 24. *I know thy rebellion and thy stiff neck*, chap. 31. 27. *They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his Children, they are a perverse and crooked generation*, chap. 32. 5: *When the Lord saw it, he abhorred them*,
be-

because of the provoking of his Sons, and of his Daughters, vers. 19. A forward Generation, Children in whom is no faith, vers. 20. They are a Nation void of Counsel, neither is there any understanding in them, vers. 28.

These things are charged on them generally and in the gross. And considering some other passages, there is great cause to suspect that much the major part of them at least were thus guilty. For in *Numb. 14. 2.* its said, *That all the Children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron; and the whole Congregation said, Would God we had died in the Land of Egypt, or would God we had died in the Wilderness. And vers. 10. All the Congregation bade stone them with stones. And vers. 33. Your Children shall wander in the Wilderness forty years, and bear your Whoredoms, until your Carcases be wasted in the Wilderness. And vers. 35. I will surely do it to all this evil Congregation that are gathered together against me. And vers. 29. Your Carcases shall fall in this Wilderness; and all that are*
num-

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numbered of you, according to your whole
number, from twenty years old and up-
ward, which have murmured against
me.

All these things considered, they will not suffer us with any plausible pretence to say, or to think that God owned this People in the bulk of them, as his Visible Church, for any such reason, as because they seemed to be Invisibly related to him by special grace. And if not, then it must be upon some, or all of these accounts following, unless any other more likely can be thought of, which I am not able to foresee, nor to suspect.

1. They were in some sort *holy* and separated unto God, as they were *Born of Parents who were in Covenant with him.* Upon which account they were called a *holy Seed*, Ezra 9. 2. Now the holiness of persons always signifies some such special relation to God, which is not common to all persons as such. Almighty God has another kind of right to the Children

dren of such as are his by Covenant, than he has to the Children of those that are not, as indeed he is in some sort more a God to such Children, than he is to the Children of others. God has a Right to all Children, and is related to them, and they to him, as he is their Creator, and they his Creatures. But he has a more special right to the Children of them that are in Covenant with him, tho such Parents have taken Covenant with God. And thus the Children of those Jews which were offered in Sacrifice by the Parents unto their Idols, were claimed by God as *his* Children, and as *Born to him*, Ezek. 16. 20. *Thou hast taken thy Sons and thy Daughters whom thou hast born unto me, and these thou hast sacrificed to them to be destroy'd.* ver. 21. *Thou hast slain my Children to cause them to pass through the fire,* chap. 23. 37. *They caused the Sons whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire.* Tho these wicked Parents had forfeited their right to the benefits of the Covenant

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venant in Gods part, through their defection from him to Idolatry, yet they had not thereby made void his right to them, and to their Children which he had by their having entred into Covenant with him to be his, and therefore he calls them *his* Children; and says they were *born unto him*. And it was in this respect in all likelihood, that St. Paul called those Children *holy* that had one believing Parent, tho the other were an unbeliever; 1 Cor. 7. 14. The Children became related to God in some sort as his (for that's the meaning of their being holy) by the Parents having devoted themselves to God by Covenant. How else could the Females among the Jews be related to God as his, when they were not Circumcised? By which yet the Males became Gods by right of Covenant; and so his, as that their Children became his, and to be related to him in an inferiour degree by right of birth. And in this sence those words of St. Paul may be understood when he says, *If the*

the root be holy, so are the branches, Rom. 11. 16. And thus *Jews by nature* (or by birth) are opposed to *Sinners of the Gentiles*, as Saints are opposed to Sinners, Gal. 2. 15.

And we shall find that Almighty God did not only claim a right to the natural Seed of Jewish Parents, by virtue of their being in Covenant with him, but also a right to those Strangers of which they were absolute owners, whether they were born in the house, or bought with money, both Fathers and their Children: and accordingly he commanded them to be mark'd for his, and to be brought into Covenant with him by Circumcising all the Males both Fathers and Children, Gen. 17. 12, 13, 23. And thus again, when any other Strangers did voluntarily joyn themselves to the Lord to be his Servants in a way of Profelytism; the Lord by virtue of the Fathers doing so, laid claim to their Children, and required them to be brought into Covenant with him by their Males being Circumcised.

And

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And thus we see why the whole body of the Jewish Nation might be all called Gods holy People, and yet not upon account of inherent sanctification.

By the way then, all these things considered, we may observe one reason why (as we may well conceive) the Apostles in their times Baptized the Households of Christian Parents when they Baptized the Parents themselves. For the Children of Christian Parents became holy unto God with a *Relative* holiness, by their Parents being his by Covenant, as well as the Children by Jewish and Profelyted Parents had been in times before, as I shewed before from those words, *Else were your Children unclean, but now are they holy,* 1 Cor. 7. 14. And they being so, I cannot apprehend any reason why they should not be as capable of being brought into Covenant with God by Baptism, as ever the Children of Jews, Profelytes, and of the Bond-men of the Jews, had been by Circumcision. And until there

there can be a good reason assigned for the contrary, it is but reasonable to believe that the Apostles in Baptizing Households, did Baptize little Children. For such Children being born of Parents in Covenant with God, were qualified for being entred into Covenant themselves : because they were thereby called by God to profess the true Religion, supposing they should live to be instructed by their Parents ; who always teach their Children to be of the same Religion which they profess themselves. And this was under the Old Testament, and has been under the New; Gods ordinary way of calling men to profess the true Religion, as I have formerly shew'd.

2. Another reason why the whole body of the Jews were called *Gods Children, his Saints, or holy People*, might be, because they were such by Covenant, in an external consideration ; that is, they had Covenanted with God to be such ; and by that they were also separated from other

F People

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People that were not called by his
Name.

3. Because of a partial performance of Covenant on their part. For they worshipped the true God, and him only as yet (except in the case of the golden Calf) who therefore was called the God of *Israel*, when almost all the world besides worshipped Idols. They also worshipped him with a worship of his own appointment; the matter of their worship consisted of Gods own instituted Ordinances, when the worship of all the rest of the world, in a manner, consisted of Superstitious and Idolatrous inventions. And by these they were a People separated to God, and differenced from the rest of the world: and thus far they glorified the God of *Israel*, when the rest of the world generally dishonoured him by false worship, both in the object and subject of it.

That which they were chiefly wanting in, was *Morality*, a true love to God, confidence in him, and submission

mission to him; and in justice and charity towards men, and humility, temperance, and sobriety in respect of themselves.

Notwithstanding which, God did not put this People of his out of his special protection, by delivering them into the hands of Spoilers, as in the days of the Judges, until they so grossly broke Covenant with him, as to *serve other Gods*. And when the Lord did at last put them away from him, as it were, and cast them out of his sight by sending them into Captivity, the ten Tribes into *Assyria*, and the two into *Babylon*, yet this did not befall them, until they had forsaken the Covenant they had made with God, and that in the highest, in *worshipping other Gods, and in observing the Statutes of the Heathen*. Tho their immoralities were otherwise very great, yet God did not give this People a *Bill of Divorce*, until they had horribly corrupted themselves with spiritual Whoredome in point of worship. See how their being cast

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off by God is charged in special upon this kind of breach of Covenant, *Dent.* 29. 25. & 31, 20. 2 *King.* 17. 15, 16, 35, 38. *Jer.* 22. 9. *Ezek.* 16. 59. and other places. All which does intimate that Almighty God owned them for his People externally, so long as they owned him only for their God, according to their Covenant with him, tho otherwise they had great guilt upon them.

This still confirms what was said before; that tho the immoralities of this People, for the generality of them, were such in other respects, as that all that they had done in Covenanting, and in a partial performance of Covenant, could not give them the reputation of being Members of the *Invisible Church*, yet their Covenant with God, and partial performances of it, in worshipping him only with a worship of his own appointment, did denominate them in an external and visible respect to be his People, and so his, as the rest of the world were not.

By

By the way then, if those of this Church under the Old Testament were stiled Saints, a holy People, and the like, upon other accounts, and in other respects than their being really and *inherently holy*, as I have shewed they were, by inspired men, then it cannot be concluded but that the People of the Churches in the New Testament were so likewise, when the Apostles in their Epistles to them, stiled them *Saints, the Sanctified in Christ Jesus*, and the like. For the same Epithetes and Appellations signifie but the same thing in the Old Testament as in the New. In both they signifie a People separated from the Pagan unbelieving world, unto God, among whom some were more so, and some less, some by *external* Covenant and profession, and some by that and much more, to wit, by *the Renovation of the whole inner man*.

I the rather note this as I pass along, because those of the Congregational way, lay so great a stress as

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they do upon St. *Pauls* styling the
Churches to whom he wrote, *Saints*,
for the proving as they would have
it, that none but such as are savingly
sanctified are Church-matter, or to
be admitted as Church-Members, ex-
cept when it is done through mistake
of them that admit them.

Having taken a brief survey how
things stand related, touching Visible
Church-Membership under the Old
Testament; I shall now proceed to
enquire how matters stand declared
touching the same under the New.
And our inquiry must be whether
persons adult, are by no other means
Visible Church-Members, unless they
are *reputatively* Members of the
Church as *Invisible*. Or whether
they do not become truly Members of
the Visible Church in Scripture ac-
count by their voluntary Covenan-
ting by Baptism with God the Fa-
ther, Son, and Holy Ghost, tho it
should be supposed that there is not
enough in them to denominate them
Members of the Church as *Invisible*.

The

The question is not whether it does not become those who admit men into the Church by Baptism and the Baptismal Covenant, to think the best of them who are so admitted, and to hope they do it with a sincere mind, when they therein give up themselves to God. But whether their due admission thereto does depend upon such a judgment in those that admit them? Or whether such Persons may be refused, and not suffered to Covenant with God in Baptism, and thereby to enter into the Church, tho they offer themselves thereto and desire it, in case those whose office and place it is to admit men thereto, should be unsatisfied touching the truth of their saving Conversion or Regeneration?

Or thus, the question is not whether it be not the duty of every man that enters into Covenant with God in Baptism, to do it with a sincere mind, and with all his heart : But whether this be required by way of *condition*, without which it is neither

lawful for the person himself to Covenant with God, nor for others to suffer him to do it, if they suspect he will do it with such a frame of mind, as is short of Regeneration.

• Nor is the question whether a man might not be refused admission into the Church, in case there were cause to suspect him to have an evil design in desiring it, to betray the Christians to their Enemies; upon account of which suspicion its probable the Disciples refused *Saul's* joining with them after his Conversion, tho he desired it, until they had received better satisfaction concerning him. But the question is whether such as have only some general and indistinct belief that Christ is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world by his death; and that the way of Christianity is the way of Salvation, and do desire admission into the Christian Church to be further instructed in that way; and in order thereto are willing to enter into Covenant with God, and to be Baptized: I say the question

question is, whether such may be suffered to Covenant with God, and enter into the Church by Baptism, supposing them as yet to have no thorow saving work of Conversion wrought in them, but only so much as may be hoped is preparatory and dispositive thereto, but yet have something, tho not all, which is necessary to it, and whose profession is serious and sincere so far as it goes, as that is opposed to dissembling knowingly.

And to prove that they may, and that the lawfulness of such Covenanting by Baptism, does not depend upon their being savingly Regenerate : and that our Saviour himself owns Unregenerate men received into the Visible Church by such Covenanting in Baptism, to be as well Members of it, as the Regenerate, I shall offer several things.

I. And I shall lay down this first as a foundation to build upon in this proof, *viz.* That it is not a thing unlawful in it self, for some such as are not of the Church as Invisible by regenerating

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nerating Grace, to enter into Covenant with God to be his People; nor is such a qualification enjoined as a necessary condition of doing so.

When all the Males at Age in *Abrahams* House were commanded to enter into Covenant with God by Circumcision: And when his Seed after him were required to cause all the Male-strangers bought with their money to do the like: And when the Profelytes from among the Gentiles were required to Circumcise themselves and all their Males, and thereby to enter into Covenant with God: I say in all this there was no such thing as their being Circumcised in heart, enjoined as a condition of their so entering into Covenant by Circumcision. The Lord also commanded *Joshua* to Circumcise all the *Hebrew* Males that in the space of forty years had been born in the Wilderness, which was an entering them into Covenant with God, and this without any condition of such qualification as would have made them of the Church as Invisible. Nay.

Nay, Almighty God at another time commanded all *Israel*, Men, Women, and Children, and the Strangers in their Camp, to enter into Covenant with him, and into his Oath, *Deut.* 29. 10, 11, 12. This command was absolute and peremptory also, and without condition. The Lord did not in this, nor in any of the other instances require men to enter into Covenant with him only upon this condition, that they did already truly fear him, and sincerely love him, or otherwise to forbear: No, but he required this Covenanting with him, to this end, that they might truly fear and love him, and cleave to him only; as a means to such an end.

No man will say that Almighty God did fore-know when he commanded all those fore-mentioned to enter into Covenant with him, that in doing it, they would all of them be qualified with such regenerating Grace, and spiritual Life, as all those are, who are of the Church as Invisible; which yet they must say or
sup-

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suppose, if they will say, that the lawfulness of Covenanting with God does depend upon their being Regenerate when they do it ; unless they will say, that God commanded such of them as were not so qualified, to do a thing which in its own nature was sinful and unlawful, which I presume none will dare to say.

By all which, it appears with full evidence, as I apprehend, that it is not unlawful for some such as are not of the Church as Invisible, to enter into Covenant with God to be his People : And that the lawfulness of such Covenanting does not depend upon mens being qualified with Regenerating Grace. And if so, then the lawfulness of mens being admitted into the Visible Church by Covenanting with God by Baptism, does not depend upon their being reputed Members of the Church as Invisible, or such as are Regenerate.

2. My next reason or argument I draw from our Saviours Commission to his Apostles, directing them, who
or

or what manner of Persons they should Baptize, and by Baptism receive into his Visible Church, *viz.* such as were made Disciples. The words of the Commission run thus, *Go ye therefore teach all Nations, Baptizing them, &c.* Or *Disciple* all Nations, or make Disciples in all Nations, so others render it. The Apostles then according to their Commission, were to Baptize all those who first were made Disciples, and by the Baptismal Covenant to enter them into the Church.

Mens being *made Disciples* then was the *rule* given by our Saviour, by which the Apostles were to govern themselves, touching *who* and what manner of Persons they were to *receive* into the Church *by Baptism*. And those were Disciples, who did attend upon the teaching of Christian Teachers with a desire to learn their doctrine, whether they had attained to Regeneration thereby or no. And such the Apostles had in Commission to Baptize. From this Commission of Christ then I argue thus. If

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If our Lord Jesus commanded his Apostles to Baptize all that were Disciples, and thereby to bring them into the Church (as he did) then he commanded or authorised more to be brought into the Visible Church by the Baptismal Covenant, than were truly Regenerate. For men might be Disciples in an inferior sense, and were so, who yet were not Regenerate. Such Disciples had our Saviour himself. Such were those, who upon the sight of his Miracles believed on him, with whom yet he would not trust himself, because he knew what was in them; John 2. 23, 24. And such were those, John 6. 66. of whom it is said, *From that time many of his Disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* And such an Unregenerate Disciple was Judas. And such perhaps were Ananias and Sapphira, and such was Simon Magus, and many other unprofitable branches, that by Baptism had been planted into Christ the true Vine.

And

And that our Saviour by Commissionating the Apostles to Baptize Disciples, intended no less but that they should Baptize all such as were made or became Disciples as such, whether Regenerate or not; and that they could understand his Commission no otherwise, our Saviours own practice and example will infer it. For tho he knew all men, and what was in them, and had declared in their hearing, that some of his Disciples did not rightly believe (*John 6. 64.*) yet did not reject those as no Disciples, whom he knew to be Unregenerate, so long as they followed him as Disciples, but caused them to be Baptized as well as those he knew to be better, as those words imply, *John 4. 1, 2.* *When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and Baptized more Disciples than John; tho Jesus himself Baptized not, but his Disciples, &c.* These words imply both, that he caused as many to be Baptized as were made Disciples, and that there were great num-

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numbers famed to be so made and
Baptized. And yet so far, as ap-
pears there were but few of them that
firmly cleaved to our Saviour till the
last : For we read of but about an
hundred and twenty Men and Wo-
men that appeared as his avowed Dis-
ciples after our Saviours Resurrection;
till the day of Pentecost. *Act. 1.*

From all which, we may observe
these two things.

1. That it was not disagreeable to
our Saviours mind, that more should
enter into Covenant with God by
Baptism, and thereby be brought in-
to the Visible Church, than were tru-
ly Regenerate : which is a further
confirmation of our former argu-
ment.

2. That if the Apostles had known
(as our Saviour did) those Disciples
that offered themselves to Baptism,
being Unregenerate, to be so ; yet
that would not have made it unlaw-
ful to admit them to Baptism, and in-
to the Church, no more than what
our Saviour caused to be done in like
case, did. All

All this shews, that men were received by the Apostles into the Church, upon other terms than the reputation of their, being of the Church as Invisible; before they were so received.

3. My next Argument to prove that they were, and that our Saviour would have his Apostles to understand that they were to be received upon larger terms, I gather from our Saviours instructing his Apostles so thorowly, and so frequently as he did, that his Church would consist of bad as well as good: which is also an argument that he did account such to be a part and Members of his Visible Church. Which we cannot think he would have done without cautioning them to look to it, and to take heed of letting such into his Church; much less would he, on the contrary, have bid them compel men to come in, that his House might be full, if he had designed that the Apostles should keep all out of the Church, but such of whose effectual conversion to God they were well satisfied. G Our

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Our Saviour by many Parables did thorowly inform his Apostles, that his Church would consist of a mixture of bad as well as good, of foolish as well as wise. Thus he told them, that the *Kingdom of Heaven should be likened unto ten Virgins, whereof five Wise and five Foolish*, Mat. 25. 1, 2. By the Kingdom of Heaven our Saviour in his Parables, and so in this, means the Kingdom of the Messias here on Earth, which is his Visible Church, in which he Reigns and Rules by his Gospel, as the Law of that Kingdom. And those are the People or Subjects of this Kingdom, who own him for their King, and his Gospel for the Law of his Kingdom. And the different effects which this Gospel was to have in the lives and behaviour of such as should receive it, was accordingly foretold by our Saviour, and resembled by various Parables, as it is here by the Wise and Foolish Virgins.

Thus we have it again in another Parable concerning the Marriage of a
Kings

Kings Son, to which both good & bad were invited, and did come, and the Wedding was furnished with such guests, *Mat. 22.*

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares that sprang up amongst it : The Parable of the Draw-net, that being cast into the Sea, gathered of every kind, bad as well as good, are of the same import. And so is the Parable of the Sower and his Seed : Wherein four sorts of Hearers or Professors of the Gospel are resembled by four sorts of ground, into which the Seed fell, of which there is but one thorowly good, *Mat. 13.*

Add unto this, that our Saviour did not only fore-tell his Apostles by these Parables, what different success the Preaching of the Gospel would meet with, even among those that would receive it, and how his Church would be filled with many bad as well as good ; but also told them plainly, without a Parable, *That many would be called, and yet but few chosen, Mat. 20. 16.*

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Wherefore, and for what reason (may we conceive) did our Saviour thus instruct his Disciples, touching what the state and condition of his Church would be, which should be gathered by the Preaching of the Gospel? but that they might not be disappointed in their expectations, nor be offended when afterwards they should find it to consist of such a mixture; or ever expect (tho they should observe his rules for the purging his Church) to find it otherwise, until the end of the world, the time appointed for a total gathering out of *his Kingdom, all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.*

And that the Apostles did not understand otherwise by our Saviours Parables and Doctrine, but that the worser as well as the better Christians were of this Kingdom of Heaven, the Visible Church, their Epistles to such Churches, in which there was such a mixture, shew; for they counted them, and treated them as Christian Brethren; in so much as *St. Paul* would

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would not have such as deserved Church-censure, and in some sort were under it, to be counted as *Enemies*, but admonished as *Brethren*, 2 Thel. 3. 14, 15.

The Apostles then being thus thoroughly instructed by our Saviour afore-hand, touching the constitution of his Church of bad as well as good; it is no ways likely that they would receive none into the Church, but under the notion of such as were truly Regenerate.

4. There are some circumstances relating to the Apostles receiving Persons into the Visible Church by Baptism, which render it incredible that they did not so receive any, but upon the reputation and esteem they had of being of the Church as Invisible.

First, one thing was the *doctrine* by which they most prevailed with men to become Disciples. Which doctrine was the Preaching that pardon of sin, and the happiness of Eternal Life are to be had by Christs suffering for Sin-

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ners, if they believe in him, and the Preaching to the People, that this Jesus rose from the Dead after his Enemies had put him to death, and confirming the truth of what they said by astonishing miracles. It's true, they did together with this, Preach the necessity of *Repentance also*: But the glad tidings of Pardon and Salvation by a Saviour so extraordinarily confirmed as it was, being *new*, and never heard of before, especially among the Gentiles, and being so hugely comfortable as it was, did so strongly affect the People, as made them instantly turn Disciples, and to promise, no doubt, a reformation of life, with an intent to perform, while they were thus filled with joy. But many of them after this transport of affection and newness of joy was over, tho they held fast the comfortable part of their profession of faith in Christ, and in his Death, yet proved partial and defective in reforming their lives, which rendred the work of Regeneration in them very doubtful at least, or rather worse than so. And

And the Apostles were fore-warned and pre-instructed by our Saviour, that upon their Preaching the joyful news which the Gospel brings, many would be so taken with it, as readily and joyfully to become Disciples, and turn Christian in profession, who yet would afterwards, when times of tryal came, either Apostatize and fall off, or foully faulter in retaining that profession, by carnal shifts to secure themselves from Persecution. For our Saviour had told them this, by opening to them who or what manner of hearers he meant by those resembled in the Parable to the stony ground on which the Seed fell; and said they were such, as when they heard the word, would *immediately receive it with gladness*, but afterwards in time of temptation, would be offended, as not having root in themselves, *Mar. 4. 16.*

All which considered, it was no ways probable that the Apostles received all they Baptized under the notion of Persons already truly Rege-

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nerate, but as Disciples only, according to the tenour of their Commission.

Secondly, another circumstance is the *great hast* the Apostles made to Baptize Persons when once they had prevailed with them to consent to it. *The same day* of Pentecost they Preached to those mentioned, *Act. 2.* they Baptized about three thousand of them. And so *Philip* Baptized the Eunuch *presently* upon the Road, after *once* Preaching to him. And the Jaylor and all his were Baptized *straight-way*, and *in the same hour* of the night in which *Paul* and *Silas* first Preached to them, *Act. 16. 33.* I think there can no instance be given of their delaying so much as four and twenty hours to Baptize any after they were willing to be Baptized.

This is another thing which renders it very incredible, that the Apostles Baptized none but upon account of their being esteemed Regenerate, or that they did Baptize Persons ordinarily by any other rule than
that

that contained in the letter of their Commission, which was to Baptize those that were Disciples, as such. If they had thought it necessary to Baptize none but whom they could prudently esteem to be of the Invisible Church, they would in all likelihood have suspended the Baptizing of many at least, until they had had some tryal of the constancy of their resolution, and experience of their reformation. And so much the rather, because it is hard to make any good judgment of mens sincerity by what they do on a sudden under some transport of affection, and before they have had some time in cooler thoughts to deliberate upon what they engage to do.

Thirdly, their *refusing none* that were willing to be Baptized, argues that they did not think none were to be Baptized before they were Regenerate, or did seem to be so. They refused none (so far as appears) that were willing to be Baptized, and to come into the Church, how notoriously

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riously bad soever they had been before. *Simon Magus* is a famous instance of this nature. And some were admitted into the Church by Baptism, before they had quite left off their Idolatrous worship. For *some with conscience of the Idol unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered to an Idol*, and their conscience being weak, is defiled, saith *St. Paul*, concerning some in the Church of *Corinth*, whom he afterwards admonisheth to flee from Idolatry, *1 Cor. 8. 7. & 10. 14.*

Now if a judgment of mens being truly Regenerate had been the rule by which the Apostles and others had governed themselves in Baptizing of men, suspicion would hardly have suffered *Philip* to have Baptized such an one as *Simon* the Sorcerer without some considerable tryal of him. And considering what discerning men the Apostles were, it is very strange that they should discern none of those unfit to be Baptized whom yet they did Baptize, that were very bad before they were Baptized, and proved to be
be

be so still shortly after : I say this would seem strange, in case nothing less had qualified them for Baptism, than a reputation of their being Regenerate.

These circumstances considered, together with the plain rule the Apostles had in their Commission, whom to Baptize, to wit, Disciples as such ; it is more than probable that they governed themselves by that rule, and Baptized those they did Baptize under the notion of Disciples, or such as were learning to be Christians, without tying themselves to a judgment that they were already Regenerate.

5. Our blessed Saviour who does not judge according to outward appearance, but according to his certain knowledge of things, does account such to be of his Visible Church, whom yet he knows to be none of the Invisible. This I gather from his own words, *John 15. 2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.* By which, he supposeth, and plainly

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plainly intimates, that there would be many such branches *in him*, by being in his Visible Church, which yet being unfruitful, and to be taken away, are therefore not of the Invisible. For by their being *in him*, is doubtless meant of their being externally and visibly *united to him* as members of his body, the Church as Visible. And how can we conceive them to be united to him so as to be said to be *in him*, but by Covenanting with him in Baptism? For by that they are brought into him: *Baptized into Christ*, as St. Paul speaks, *Gal. 3. 27.* and *planted in him by Baptism*, *Rom. 6. 5.*

And upon the same account, and for the same reason for which our Saviour judgeth and accounteth men to be in him, to be of his Visible Church, we may, we must so account them likewise. The Scripture knoweth no other being in Christ, but by being united and related to him, either by external Covenanting with him, or by internal Renovation. In this latter

latter sence, such unfruitful branches as our Saviour speaks of in the Text aforesaid, are not in him: and therefore it must be understood in the former sence, unless any third sence of mens being in Christ can be found out in Scripture, which I never yet heard of.

6. Our blessed Saviour in the Primitive times owned such to be of his Visible Church as were not of the Invisible, by pouring out upon them miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost. That there were such gifts pouted out upon such men as tho they did believe, yet not to the saving of the soul, is evident by our Saviours own words, *Mat. 7. 22. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not Prophested in thy name, and in thy name have cast out Devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me ye that work iniquity.* And the Author to the *Hebrews* plainly supposes that such were partakers of the Holy Ghost, might

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might be so bad as quite to fall away
from the Christian profession, *Heb.*
6. 4, 5, 6.

And that our Saviour by pouring
out such gifts upon such men, did
own them as related to him, and as
Members of his Visible Church, will
appear when we consider that the
promise of these was made to such as
should believe, and only to such,
Mark 16. 17. *These signs shall follow
those that believe : In my name shall
they cast out Devils, they shall speak
with new tongues.* By conferring up-
on such Believers, whose faith did
not operate to Regeneration, he set
his Seal upon them as mark'd for his
in a visible relation. For the pouring
out of miraculous gifts of the Spirit,
is called the sealing of the Spirit. *After
ye believed, ye were sealed with the
holy spirit of promise,* *Eph.* 1. 13.

There was a two-fold seal of the Spi-
rit; the one by inward sanctification,
or renewing men to the Image of
God. Of this *St. Paul* seems to speak;
2 Cor. 1. 22. *Who hath sealed us, and
given*

given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts. This Sealing belongs to the Invisible state of the Church. But then there was a sealing of the spirit which belonged then to the visible state of the Church, by which, a visible mark or seal was set upon them, and by which God owned them as related to him as Members of his Visible Church, and that was the conferring upon them some extraordinary or miraculous gifts. And this was common to those that had but common grace, and were unregenerate, as well as to them that had special, as appears by the 7th. of *Mat.* and 6th. of *Heb.* fore-mentioned. These extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost seem to be confined to the Visible Church, 1 *Cor.* 12. 28, *God hath set in the Church, Apostles, Prophets and Teachers, then Miracles, gifts of Healing, diversities of Tongues;* by which, those that had them bestowed upon them, were known to be of the Church, and to be owned by God to be so.

The

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The conferring miraculous gifts upon such men as yet shall be rejected by Christ at last, as workers of iniquity, argues these things. First, that they were Believers in Christ in a sence, because they wrought their Miracles in his Name, and by virtue of Faith in his Name: And because our Saviour had said that such signs as they shew'd should *follow them that believe*, Mark 16. 17. Secondly, that they professed the Christian doctrine: for that miraculous power was conferred upon them for the confirmation of the doctrine they professed and Preached: *The Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following*, vers. 20. Besides, our Saviour brings them in pleading that they had Prophesied in his Name. Thirdly, they being Believers, Professors and Preachers of the Christian doctrine, it argues that they had been Baptized, and by Baptism made Members of the Visible Church, and that our Saviour did own them for such, by conferring on them such extra-

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traordinary gifts which he did not bestow upon Unbelievers.

7. I might add in the last place, that our Saviour owns some bad men to be related to him as *his Servants*. Hence it is that he calls them *Servants*, tho *slothful Servants*, Mat. 25, 26. *unprofitable Servants*, vers. 30. *evil Servants*, Mat. 24. 48. *wicked Servants*, chap. 18. 32. The title of *Servants* is given to such as these, because they are of the Household of the great Lord and Master ; that is, Members of his Visible Church, which is his House. And St. Paul saith, *in a great House* (and so in the Church he means) *there are not only Vessels of gold, and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour, and some to dishonour*, 2 Tim. 2. 20. And our Saviour hath said, *that many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven ; but the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness*, Mat. 8. 11, 12.

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Having seen what evidence the holy Scriptures do afford to prove that God, that Christ himself does own others to be part of his Visible Church, than such as are of the Church as Invisible, I shall now proceed to take into consideration such Texts of Scripture as in the apprehension of some seem most to favour the contrary opinion.

I will begin with 1 Pet. 3. 21. *The like figure whereunto Baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good Conscience towards God, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.* Whence it is argued, that those who were received into the Church by Baptism, were always supposed such as had the answer of a good Conscience towards God, the inward qualification which answers the outward figure or sign in Baptism, Death unto sin, and a Resurrection unto a new life.

But the answer to this is very easie. The Apostle in these words was shewing what is necessary in the parties

ties Baptized, besides their Baptism, to make their Baptism available to their salvation; but not what is necessary by way of condition to their being Baptized: this Text meddles not with that, so far as appears by any clause or circumstance in it. And is much of the same nature, and much like to that of St. *Paul*, Rom. 2. 28, 29. where he saith, *That is not Circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but that which is of the heart and in the spirit.* By which, he does not mean that Circumcision which was but outward in the flesh, served to no other ends, but to signify Heart-circumcision: for it did engage the Circumcised in Covenant with God, and initiate them, and give them entrance into the Church, and made them partakers of the Oracles and Ordinances of God there, as he shews in the following words in the next Chapter: But his meaning was, that Circumcision in the flesh alone, without Circumcision of the heart, would not avail to any mans having acceptance with God.

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So here, that Baptism which consists in outward washing only, the putting away the filth of the flesh, will not save, will not avail to salvation without the answer of a good Conscience towards God. But there it does not follow, but that it may avail as well as Circumcision in the Letter did, to bring men into the Visible Church, and to procure them the benefit of the outward privileges of it.

Another Text is, *John 3. 5. Except a man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* Some that are of the opinion which I am opposing, by the Kingdom of God here, understand the Church, as well Visible as Invisible, and then infer, that none can enter into the Church without being born of the Spirit as well as of Water.

But the answer to this is very easie. For if by Kingdom of God here, we understand either the Church as Invisible, or the Kingdom of glory, it is granted that men cannot enter in-

to the Kingdom of God except they be born of the Spirit. But then this does not at all oppose what I have been proving, *viz.* That Men may be, and many really are Members of the Visible Church, and that in Gods account, who yet are none of the Invisible Church by being born of the Spirit, or internally Regenerated.

And that by Kingdom of God here, cannot be meant the Visible Church, is evident, because many have entered into it, who yet have not been born of the Spirit, as I have, as I think, abundantly proved, against all reasonable contradictions. Our Saviour we see speaks here of a being *born of Water*, and of a being *born of the Spirit*, which are two distinct things. And there are many that have been born of Water, and thereby entered into the Visible Church, that have never been born of the Spirit. And there are many also that have entered into the Visible Church by being born of Water, who have been born of the Spirit, but not till afterwards,

not till some time after they have been in the Visible Church. We must suppose this, or else say there is no possibility of effectual conversion in the Visible Church; which is a thing so absurd to imagine, and so much against all experience, as that no man, I think, has the heart to assert it, which yet must be asserted if the other be denied.

It is further alledged from those words, *Tit. 3. 5. According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* I say it is hence alledged, that since Baptism is called the washing of Regeneration, that therefore those who are admitted to Baptism, must be supposed to be Regenerated before or in Baptism.

Answer. This follows not, since Baptism may be called the washing of Regeneration for another reason, and in another respect more probable, and that is, because men by Covenant are engaged to become new men, and to lead new lives. And it is from this engage-

engagement by Baptism that *St. Paul* so often exhorts and persuades Christians to mortification and a new life, as we see he does, *Rom. 6. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Col. 2. 12. & 3. 1, 2.* As *John* the Baptist Baptized the People *unto Repentance*, *Mat. 3. 11.* So they are Baptized *unto* Regeneration; that is, they are thereby brought under a solemn engagement to repent, and so to be Regenerate. And in this respect Baptism is properly enough called the Laver of Regeneration. Not that Baptism does inwardly Regenerate by the act done or suffered to be done, tho it does engage to it; but it is the work of the Holy Ghost as the principal agent, and therefore is here called the Renewing of the Holy Ghost.

And its evident that the washing of Regeneration, and the Renewing of the Holy Ghost are here mentioned as two different things, as they are in their own nature. Altho the Christians here spoken of, were said to be saved according to Gods mercy by

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both, yet it no ways follows that this end could not be attained, unless they were renewed by the Holy Ghost at the same instant in which they were Baptized, for the one might succeed the other in point of time, as often it hath done. And if so, there can no necessity be inferred from hence of not admitting men to the one, but upon supposition of their being already qualified with the other.

It is true, men by Baptism it self are brought into a new state externally; they are brought into a new relation to God, to Christ, and to the Church his body, and to new enjoyments also in the Church. And it is to be noted our Saviour calls Baptism, a being born of *Water*, as a birth distinct from that of being born of the *Spirit*. Our Saviour in that discourse of his with *Nicodemus* about Baptism, and being born again, seems to allude to the Jews custom of receiving *Proselytes* by Baptism as well as by Circumcision, who did reckon they were there-

thereby born again as it were, and brought into a new state of life, as is well known by the tenour of the writings of the Jewish Doctors. And altho by being born of Water, men may be said to be born of the Spirit in one sence, for they are Baptized into the Name of the Holy Ghost, as well as into the Name of the Father and the Son: and *by one spirit we are all Baptized into one body*, as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 12. 13. Yet in a higher and more emphatical sence, all that are born of the Spirit, are not so born when they are Baptized, but most of them afterwards, as the experience of the Church doth abundantly manifest.

Again, another Scripture is *Act. 2. 38. Repent and be Baptized every one of you, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins.* Now it may be some will argue hence, that since Baptism is enjoined in order to the obtaining of remission of sins: and since Baptism alone without Repentance here required with it, will not
avail

vail for the obtaining such remission, that therefore a being Baptized for the remission of sins, always supposes Repentance in him that is Baptized.

Answer. The most that can be inferred hence, is, that Baptism as well as Repentance, and Repentance as well as Baptism are directed to, and enjoined in order to the obtaining Remission of sins; but not that such Repentance as is available to this end, is enjoined as *the condition* of being Baptized, and by that to be received into the Church. Tho I deny not, but that in the adult a profession of sorrow for sin past, and a promise of amendment for time to come, was always required before Baptism, but sorrow for sin alone, avails not to the obtaining of remission of sin, and what the promise of amendment for the future would prove, was uncertain to those who received Persons into the Church by Baptism. The Apostles, we may well suppose, received such raw Disciples to Baptism, as those were to whom this counsel
was

was here given, upon like terms that *John* the Baptist received the multitudes that flock'd to him for Baptism; *and they were Baptized, confessing their sins*: They confessed themselves such sinners as needed amendment, and professed sorrow for what was past; and by receiving Baptism, engaged themselves to amend for time to come, and accordingly he is said to Baptize them *unto Repentance*, Mat. 3. 11. But very many of them fell short afterwards of performing their engagement, *John* 5. 35. Baptism and Repentance as saving are not inseparable in point of time, in reference to the obtaining Remission of sin. If a man do effectually repent, tho it be not till long after he is Baptized, yet his Baptism and Repentance will be effectual for the obtaining Remission of sins. And if so, then such Repentance as is saving, is not of necessity before Baptism, to the obtaining of Remission of sins.

But the truth is, if we will infer any thing from the Text under consideration,

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deration, in reference to our present enquiry, it may be that which is so far from proving mens Visible Church-Membership to depend upon the credibility and reputation of their being of the Church as Invisible, as that it will much rather prove the direct contrary, viz. That the credibility of mens being of the Church as Invisible, depends upon their being of the Church as Visible. For it tends to prove that men living under the Gospel (and others I meddle not with in this matter) cannot approve themselves to be Members of the Invisible Church, until they are first made Members of the Visible by Baptism. For we see men are as well to be Baptized for the Remission of sin, as to repent to obtain it: As the promise of being saved is elsewhere made unto a being Baptized, as well as it is to believing (*He that believeth and is Baptized shall be saved*, Mark 16. 16.) And if so, then a man cannot be concluded to be in a pardoned state, that through his own default is not Baptized, by
which

which he should be made of the Visible Church: and if he cannot be concluded to be in a pardoned state without this, then he cannot be duly reputed to be in the Invisible Church-state, because there are none in that Church-state but what are pardoned.

If any should alledge the words of St. Paul *If any man be in Christ he is a new Creature,* (2 Cor. 5. 17.) and infer that none are by Baptism, or otherwise in Christ, but what are new Creatures, the answer to them is this :

If by any mans being in Christ, be understood of such a being in him as is saving, then he is indeed a new Creature, and truly Regenerate. But then that is such a being in Christ as is not visible to men, and therefore does not belong to our present inquiry. But if you read the words according to the Margin, *If any man be in Christ, let him be a new Creature,* then this Text does not infer, that if men be in Christ they are new Creatures,

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tures, but that they ought to be so,
according to their Covenant-engage-
ment, when they were planted into
him by Baptism.

Acts 8.37. It is likewise urged to
prove that a true saving Faith, such as
makes men Members of the Church as
Invisible, is required as necessary to
qualifie them for Baptism and Visible
Church-Membership. For when the
Eunuch said to *Philip*, *Here is Water,*
what doth hinder me to be baptized? *Phi-*
lip said unto him, *If thou believest with*
all thine heart, thou maiest: And he an-
swered and said, *I believe that Christ is*
the Son of God. Here *Philip* seems to
make a believing with all the heart,
to be the *condition* of admitting the
Eunuch to Baptism; and what less can
a believing with all the heart be, than a
true saving Faith?

To which I answer thus: That the
Apostles and Evangelists, such as
Philip was, did indeed suppose and
expect a faith in Christ; in all adult
Persons whom they Baptized into
him, is not to be doubted. Nor is.

is it to be doubted, but that they press'd and persuaded them to be very hearty and serious in their undertaking the Christian profession when they Baptized them into it; and so did *Philip* here. But yet we see that for all that, *Philip* Baptized this Eunuch upon his bare professing that he believed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God; tho he did not say that he believed with all his heart. And upon like terms we may suppose he had Baptized *Simon Magus* a little before, *vers.* 13. concerning whom the Scripture tells us, not only that he said he believed, as it does here of the Eunuch, but that he did indeed believe. *Then Simon himself also believed*, saith the Text. And so did those mentioned; *John* 2. 23. and so did those who were likened to the Stony ground; for they *believed for a time*, but after fell away, *Luk.* 8. 13. *And many among the chief Rulers also believed on Christ*, who yet would not confess him, *John* 12. 42. So that when men are said to believe in Christ, it does not
always

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always and necessarily imply a saving
faith, or a new birth, or an Invisible
Church-state. Men might and did
believe in Christ before they were
Baptized, who yet we cannot say
were Regenerate by their believing,
or in the Invisible Church-state; as
Simon Magus for instance: And yet
such believing, or professing to be-
lieve, qualified them for Baptism.

And when *Philip* here required of
the Eunuch a believing with all his
heart, in order to his being Baptized,
we cannot reasonably think that he
meant more thereby (if he proposed
it as a condition of his being Baptized)
then that he should be serious and real
in it, in opposition to *dissembling*.
For that was as much as we can rea-
sonably think the Eunuch was then
capable of knowing concerning him-
self, and therefore no more could be
expected from him.

But then such a believing with all
the heart, could be no argument from
which it could be concluded that
therefore either he, or any other in
his

his or lower circumstances that did so believe, were therefore savingly Regenerate. For it may very rationally be presumed that *all* generally, who in the first times of the Gospel, made profession of faith in Christ, in order to their being Baptized, tho many of them Unregenerate, yet did really believe in Christ more or less. For what reason is it imaginable that they should dissemble when they profess'd faith in Christ, as the Son of God, in order to their being Baptized and received into the Church, when yet as the times were then, they could have no worldly advantage in prospect, as a motive for them to dissemble, and to profess and say they did believe what they *knew* they did not believe?

And that such a believing as is real, and not dissembled, may be said to be a believing *with all the heart*, tho it proceed not from, nor is accompanied with a principle of regeneration or sincerity in a moral sence, will be yet rendred the more credible, if we

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consider what the Scripture says in a
case not much unlike this under con-
sideration. It is said of *all Juda*, and
Benjamin, and of the Strangers out
of *Ephraim*, *Manasseth*, and *Simeon*,
that they *entered into Covenant with*
an Oath, to seek the Lord God of their
Fathers, with all their heart, and with
all their soul, 2 Chron. 15. 12. And
it's said again at the 15th. vers. *That*
all Juda rejoyced at the Oath; for they
had sworn with all their heart. Now
this Covenant and Oath entred into,
was to engage them to worship the
true God only, in opposition to
their worshipping of strange Gods, in
which many of them had been tardy,
till *Asa* the King set upon this work
of Reformation, as we may see, chap.
14. 3.

And when it's said that *all Juda* did
thus Covenant and Swear *with all*
their heart to seek the Lord God of
their Fathers, it can in reason import
no more in reference to many of
them, than to signifie that they did
not *dissemble* in doing it, but that
there

there was really the consent of their minds concurring with their verbal engagement by Covenant and Oath. For no considering man will think that this Covenanting by *all* the men of *Juda*, without limitation or exception, could proceed from an inward principle of Regeneration or Spiritual life in reference to *all* of them; and yet they are *all* said to do it, and with all their heart. And if not, then the Covenanting with all the heart of such of them as had no principle of spiritual life, must be understood of their doing it really, and without dissembling the matter.

I alledge all this to show, that men may do things with all their heart in Religion, when yet what they so do, does not proceed from any principle of Regeneration, or a divine life. And if they may, then we cannot conclude, that tho *Philip* should be understood to require a believing with all the heart, as a conditional qualification for Baptism, that therefore he required such a faith, as by

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which a man must necessarily be Regenerate before he may duly desire Baptism.

And the truth is, it is not to be imagined that such raw Disciples as were generally Baptized, and of such short standing as to be Baptized the same day, and sometimes near the same hour, in which they were first instructed in the Christian doctrine, could be able to know before they were Baptized, that they did indeed savingly believe; and if not, it could not be reasonable to require the knowledge of such a thing concerning themselves, as a condition of their desiring or requiring Baptism.

Men may easily know their own minds, whether they do believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God or no, and so may be able to profess without dissimulation, that they do believe that he is, when they do indeed believe so. But because many that did in those times, and do in these believe in Jesus Christ as sent of God, and as the Son of God, who yet were not
then,

then, nor are now truly renew'd by it in heart and life, therefore no man can ordinarily satisfie himself touching the soundness and savingness of his faith, but by some competent time of trial and experience of the life and power of it, by its effects in purifying the heart and life, and overcoming the world, and working by love. We understand by St. James and other Writers of the holy Scriptures, that there were many, who knowing that they did believe, yet unduly promised themselves justification and salvation from such their believing, when yet it was not accompanied with such works of a good and holy life, as by which faith is made perfect. And many such there are, as is justly to be feared, now in our days. These men deceived themselves, they *deceived their own hearts*, as St. James expresth it : but not in thinking they did believe, for they knew they did, but in persuading themselves that their faith was sufficient to salvation, when yet it was but a *dead and*

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barren faith, not producing the fruits
of a truly Christian temper and con-
versation.

Now it was upon the believing Je-
sus Christ to be the Son of God, or the
Messiah, or he by whom alone sal-
vation is to be had, and an undissem-
bled profession of this belief, that qua-
lifies men for Baptism, however it
proved afterwards as to the efficacy
of its operation. And this real un-
dissembled belief, was that, I doubt
not, which *Philip* required of the Eu-
nuch, when he said, *If thou believest
with all thine heart thou maist be Bap-
tized.* And the Eunuchs answer, up-
on which he was Baptized by *Philip*,
does intimate so much, when he on-
ly said, I believe that Jesus Christ is
the Son of God. And more than this
I conceive, cannot be duly inferred
from those words of *Philip* to the Eu-
nuch, for the reasons I have already
given.

These are the principal Texts made
use of to countenance the opinion
which I have in this Inquiry opposed.
There

There are objections or pleas drawn from some other, which are well answered by *Mr. Thomas Lamb*, as some of these I have insisted on also are, in his *fresh suit against Independency*.

And thus upon our Inquiry we have found as I conceive, that others are of the Visible Church in Scripture account, and so in Gods account, by whose inspiration the Scriptures were written, than those which are of the Church as Invisible, or them that seem to be so. For Almighty God, as has been shown, accounteth and owneth such to be his People in distinction from the rest of the world, that have entered into Covenant with him, tho otherwise they or many of them, are far from seeming to be of the Church as Invisible. And if God esteem of them as such, then so must his Servants likewise: and if the Scripture account them such, it will become us to do so too, who profess to make the holy Scriptures the rule of our judgment.

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After that, upon our Inquiry we have found things thus ; Let not any man now say , that by this doctrine we confound the Kingdom of the Devil with the Kingdom of God. For this would but reflect after an unseemly manner upon the wisdom of God for thus numbering bad men as well as good to be of his Visible Church, as externally related to him, and as worshippers of him. Secret Hypocrites belong to the Kingdom of the Devil, as well as those that are more visibly such ; and yet none deny but that many such are in the Visible Church, nor do they count this a confounding Gods Kingdom with the Devils.

There is no doubt but that the Devil has his Visible and Invisible Kingdom as well as God has his. But those Hypocrites, whether secret or more open, which are of the Visible Church, tho they are in a sence of the Kingdom of the Devil, yet must be reckoned to be not of his Visible, but of his Invisible Kingdom. So
that

that the Hypothesis I seek to establish, does not at all tend to confound Gods visible Kingdom, and the Devils visible Kingdom one with another, much less their Invisible Kingdoms.

For those are not in Scripture reckoned to be of the Visible Kingdom of the Devil, who professedly worship the true God, and him only, and Jesus Christ as his Son and only Mediator, tho otherwise bad : But such as worship Idols, other gods, and other mediators, in doing of which, they do in effect worship the Devil, who is the founder of such worship.

Those Kingdoms or Nations are in Scripture counted of the Devils Kingdom or Dominion, in which his Worship and Ordinances (Idol-worship, and the Rites of that worship) are established by publick Authority, as the Religion of those Nations. As on the contrary, those Nations or Kingdoms are counted Gods Kingdoms, in which the Word and Worship of God are by publick Authority owned

owned and established as the Religion of those Nations. Thus when Idol-worship was put down, and cast out of the several Territories of the Roman Empire by the first Christian Emperors, and the Christian Religion established by publick Authority, as the Religion of those Nations, then the Devil was said to be *cast down*, and *the Kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ, to be come*, Rev. 12. 9, 10. And again, *The Kingdoms of this world are said to become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ*: When Idol-worship which is Devilish worship, is rejected by the Authority of those Kingdoms, Revel. 11. 15. Not that there shall be no Hypocrites or Carnal Professors of Christianity in these Kingdoms, when they are thus become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ: But tho there be, yet so long as the true Christian doctrine and worship is owned and established by the Government or ruling power of those Kingdoms; and so long as the generality of the
Inha-

Inhabitants are for the same doctrine and worship in opposition to Idolatrous and Antichristian doctrine and worship, they are accounted to belong to Gods Visible Kingdom in the world, and not the Devils, however many of those Inhabitants may belong to the Invisible Kingdom of the Devil. And thus those are called the *Children of Gods Kingdom* by our Saviour, who yet at last shall be *cast out into outer darkness*, Mat. 8. 12. But of this more afterwards.

QUERY IX.

WHether God hath granted any right to Church-priviledges, to those who are only of the Church as Visible, but not as Invisible?

That such have right to them before men, unless they are justly deprived of them by Church-censures, those will grant who yet deny that they

124 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
they have any right to them *by Gods allowance.* But our present enquiry is, whether they have any right by Gods allowance? And if that be true, which we now suppose we found to be so in our former enquiry, *viz.* that God himself doth own very many such to be of the Church as Visible, which yet are not at all of it as Invisible; then it will be but reasonable to conclude from thence, that he does allow them a share in the external and temporary priviledges of that relation, except in those cases wherein he himself hath made an exception: For otherwise God by conferring on them the priviledge of Relation to himself and his Church, has conferred upon them a right to the priviledges of that relation, so far as the relation it self extends. For the relation and the priviledges of the relation go together, except in case of forfeiture by miscarriage. The union of parts does of it self infer right to communion with them in things common to the whole,

The

The right of those in the Visible Church, to Visible Church-privileges, does arise I conceive from that Covenanting between God and them in Baptism, by which they engaged themselves to be his People, as God on the other hand had engaged himself to be their God on that condition.

; Now for ought that appears from the Scriptures to the contrary, so far as they perform Covenant with God, in being a People unto him, so far he owns them to be his People; and so far as he does so, he allows them the privilege of his People, which is a share in his household fare, and in the provisions for his Family, which are his Word and Ordinances. If they worship no other God, and *hold the Head* Christ Jesus in point of doctrine and worship, and own his doctrine and precepts as the rule of faith and life, and worship God in his Ordinances, and have the form of godliness, tho otherwise destitute of the power of it; yet as they are thus far

126 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
a People unto God, so God so far
owns them as a People unto him, se-
parated unto him from the Idolatrous
and Infidel world, and accordingly
allows them an interest and share in
the external priviledges of his People,
of which communion in his Word and
Ordinances is the chief. Only where
God himself hath put a *bar* to this en-
joyment, there the Visible Church
ought to do so too, as in those cases
wherein deprivation by Church-cen-
sures is enjoyned. Right to the pri-
viledges of the Church, comes in by
mens relation to it as parts or mem-
bers of it: and so long as the relati-
on continues, so long a right to the
external priviledges continues, except
in the case before excepted. Those
that are related to the Church, both
as Visible and Invisible, have a right
from God to Church priviledges both
external, internal, and eternal: but
those who are related to the Church
only externally as it is Visible, have
right only to the external priviledges
of it.

Thus

Thus far we have argued from the nature and reason of the subject under consideration. Come we now to enquire what the usage of the Church has been as to point of fact in this matter, as we have it recorded in Scripture. And as for the Old Testament Church; the whole Nation [of the Jews that entered into Covenant with God to be his People, were allowed their part and share in the Ordinances of publick worship, and not only so, but were commanded to observe them, save in some exempt cases; as while they were under any legal uncleanness, and in those particular cases of guilt, for which they were to be deprived of their lives as well as communion, and to be cut off from among the People. Three times in the year were all their Males to appear before the Lord to keep three solemn Feasts appointed: and yet I think no body will imagine them to be all without exception of the Church as Invisible.

And

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And when any Strangers from among the Gentiles had a mind to turn Profelytes to the Jews Religion, all that was required of them, to make them capable of communion in the Passover, was but to Circumcise all their Males, by which they entred into Covenant with God, *Exod. 12. 48.*

And since it was thus in the old Testament Church, it is not to be imagined that the terms of external communion should be more rigorous and severe in the new, since our Saviours *yoke is easie, and his burden light,* in comparison of that among the Jews, which was a yoke as St. Peter speaks, *which neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear.* All the same adult Persons which were received into the Church by Baptism, were admitted to communion of the Church in the Ordinances of worship. Thus it was in the first Christian Church, which was a pattern to all that followed, *Act. 2. 41, 42.* When the three thousand were added to the Church by Baptism;

Baptism; *They continued in the Apostles Doctrine, and in breaking of bread and prayer, Acts 2. 42.*

And St. Paul saith, *By one spirit we are all baptized into one body whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit.* The same, *all* we see were made to drink into one spirit; which were baptized into one body, 1 Cor. 12. 13. By drinking into one spirit, is meant Communion in the Lords Supper, according to the sense of all Interpreters that I have met with. Again, he had said thus, *Chap. 10. 17. We being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of one bread.* Here again the same *all* that made one body, were partakers of one bread. So that the extent of the Communion of the parts, equallized the union of the whole.

Nor indeed is there any one instance in Scripture that I can find, of any one person that has been refused Communion with a Christian Church when he has desired it, who has been

130. *Of Visible Church-Membership,*

before received into the Church by Baptism, except such as have been under Censure of the Church for some Capital Offence. And such indeed are to be excluded (until brought to repentance) by the Ecclesiastical Government under which they live. And St. Paul has given direction in what manner of Cases, and for what manner of Offences men are to be proceeded against by Church Censure greater or lesser, after due admonition otherwise used. But now (saith he)

I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat. 1 Cor. 5. 11. For these and such like Crimes, a Church may, and ought in her governing capacity, to deny her Communion with persons guilty of them, after due admonition. And accordingly our Church has ordered publick admonition frequently to be made in these words with many other. *If any of you be a blasphemer*
of

and National Constitutions.

of God, a hinderer or slanderer of his Word, an Adulterer, or be in malice, or envy, or in any other grievous crime;

Repent you of your sins, or else come not to that holy Table, lest after the taking of that holy Sacrament, the Devil enter into you, as he did into Judas, and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you to destruction both of body and soul.

And further, If any that desire to communicate be an open and notorious evil Liver, or have done any wrong to his Neighbour, by word or deed, so that the Congregation be thereby offended; the Curate having knowledge thereof, shall call him and advertise him, that in any wise he presume not to come to the Lords Table until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented and amended his former naughty life, that the Congregation may thereby be satisfied, which before were offended. The same order shall the Curate use with those betrayers, whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign, not suffering them to be partakers of the Lords Table, until he know them to be reconciled.

132 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*

I know there are several things wont to be alledged against admitting such to the Lords Supper who have not saving Grace; as,

1. That such will but increase their sin, and further their Damnation by partaking of it, so long as they are unregenerate. To which it may be Answered, (1.) That such would no less sin by neglecting to Obey Christs Command, *Do this in remembrance of me*, and in neglecting to prepare themselves for it, than they do when they come to this Supper of our Lord unprepared, but rather indeed more. For by not coming they make themselves guilty of a double Disobedience; the one in not doing what Christ has Commanded to be done in remembrance of him; the other in not preparing to do it after a right manner, whereas by coming unprepared, they make themselves guilty but of one of them. (2.) For the same reason Men should not Pray while unregenerate, as not come to the Sacrament while they are so.

so. For they are required to do both the one and the other in a right manner, as well as to do them at all. But yet no judicious Man will say, that all unregenerate Men ought to restrain Prayer before God, or to be restrained from it. For it is possible, and to be hoped, that their Praying may have that good effect upon them as to make them better: And the same may be said of such mens coming to the Sacrament. (3.) Though the Scripture directs that by Church-Censure Men should be debarr'd from the Sacrament for open Acts of Scandal, yet I know not where it directs to keep them from it for want of saving Grace, so long as not guilty of such Seandal.

2. *Obj.* It is again Objected, that this Ordinance is appointed for the *Confirmation* of the Converted, but not for the *Conversion* of the unconverted.

Answer. I grant indeed that this Sacrament is not appointed for mens first Conversion to Christianity, or for

134 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
unbaptized Persons: But yet it may
be very useful together with other
means, to carry on the work of Con-
version from common Grace to spe-
cial: And yet such is the Conver-
sion generally which is wrought in
such as are Educated in the Christian
Religion. The use of this Sacra-
ment in conjunction with Christian
Doctrine, may very well contribute
its share in carrying on this progres-
sive change in Men by improving
common Grace into special. *The*
Preaching of the Cross is to us who
are saved, the Power of God to Sal-
vation, saith St. Paul, 1 Cor. 1. 18.
And Christ as Crucified, is by the
Lords Supper Preached to the seeing
of the Eye, as well as by Word and
Doctrine he is Preached to the hear-
ing of the Ear: And *the Eye affecteth*
the Heart, as the Prophet speaks, as
well as the Ear: And therefore the
one may help on the work of Con-
version from common Grace to spe-
cial, as well as the other. And in all
likelihood it often does so, as we
have

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have reason to think when we see
Men who as may be feared have no
more than common Grace, upon oc-
casion of their going to the Sacra-
ment, to become more serious both
before and after, than usually they are
at other times. And if such would
but frequent it often, it might well
be hoped that it would work a great
alteration in them, by making them
often more serious and considerate
about the things of their Souls. And
indeed what is more likely to beget
a love to our Blessed Saviour, than
such a lively representation of his
wonderful love in dying for us, as is
made in the Celebration of that Sa-
crament?

3. *Obj.* The giving this Sacrament
to such as by a saving Faith are not
in Covenant with God, is but like
setting a Seal unto a blank. To
which it is answered,

First, That this Sacrament is not
a Seal of Mans Faith, but of Gods
Covenant; and the Seal that is set to
that, is not set to a Blank. The Lords

136 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
Supper is not a Seal to assure such as receive it, that they have Faith, but to assure them of Gods Faithfulness in his Covenant; and to work in them a confidence in that. Circumcision, which was a Seal of the Covenant, was not set to a blank when applied to Children before they had Faith.

Secondly, though this Sacrament be indeed a Seal of Gods Covenant directly, yet it must be acknowledged that the end and design of its being so, is to help Mens Faith in Gods Faithfulness and Goodness in reference to what he has promised in his Covenant. But then though this be so, yet the giving this Sacrament to such who have but common Faith, cannot be said to be like setting a Seal to a blank; because a common Faith, such as unregenerate Men may have, is more than no Faith at all, and yet it is the having no Faith at all, which can only answer to the setting a Seal to a blank in this case. For a common Faith may be improved until it become special, as I have shewed;

showed; and upon that account this Sacrament being a Sacrament for Mens improvement in Faith and Love, may as well belong to them who have but common Faith as to those whose Faith is special and saving. And indeed what is more likely to make a Faith which is but dull and unactive, as a common Faith is, to become lively and vigorous, than that which with great Advantage is to this end, represented to the Mind in this Sacrament? as I said before.

Thirdly, I might add, that the Covenant made in Baptism, is Recognized and renewed in the use of the Lords Supper; and this doubtless may be done by such as have but common Faith, as well as by those who have that which is special and saving.

4. *Obj.* The saying of St. Paul in 1 Cor. 11. 28. *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup,* is alledged against mens being admitted or presuming to come to the Lords Supper who have not saving Grace, though

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though otherwise free from Scanda-
lous Offences. They suppose Saving
Grace, Repentance, Faith, and Love,
to be the Matter about which the
Apostle would have Men to examine
themselves, as necessary to qualifie
them for Lawful Communion in that
Sacrament.

Now that for Men to examine
themselves whether they have saving
Grace or no, is very necessary for
their Preparation for coming to the
Sacrament, is granted; because there-
by they will the better come to know
the state of their own Souls, and what
it is that hinders their assurance of ha-
ving such Grace, and the necessity of
removing it, and their need of such
a Saviour as he is whose Love they
are to commemorate in that Sacra-
ment. And God forbid that I should
in the least encourage any to neglect
the best Preparation they can make
for so concerning a business as the ap-
proaching to the Table of the Lord is.
And except by examination they can
find in themselves some knowledge
and

and belief that Christ Jesus is the Saviour of Sinners, by dying for them, and of the Nature and End of this Sacrament in general; I do not understand how they should receive any benefit by coming to it.

But to conclude from this saying of the Apostle, that Men are to forbear coming to the Table of the Lord, until by self-examination they can satisfy themselves that they have saving Grace, I think to be more than ever the Apostle intended in those words. For such satisfaction and assurance is hardly attainable while Christians are but weak and unexperienced, though known to God to be sincere. And for this cause it seems to be more than is fit to be imposed upon Men as a *condition* of their coming to the Lords Supper.

But by the reason which St. Paul gives in verse 29. why he would have Men to examine themselves before they eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup, it appears that the thing in special and in particular concerning
which

140 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
which he would have them examine
themselves, was about their Capacity of *discerning the Lords Body* in
doing it. For he tells them that if
they did not discern the Lords Body
in eating that Bread, &c. they would
eat and drink *unworthily*, and like-
wise *Judgment* to themselves.

For our better understanding the
scope and meaning of *St. Paul* in this
his Discourse touching unworthy
Communicating at the Lords Table,
we will enquire alittle, what he
means by eating and drinking *unwor-
thily*; what by not *discerning the
Lords Body*; and what by being
*guilty of the Body and Blood of the
Lord*.

1. The *unworthy* eating of that
Bread, and drinking that Cup of the
Lord, of which the Apostle speaks,
signifies the receiving those Sacred
Symbols of Christs Body and Blood,
with a frame of Mind incongruous
and unsuitable to the nature of that
Feast, and to a participation of it;
Or it is a receiving those Consecrated
Elements

Elements with such an unsuitable Mind as makes Men incapable of receiving that benefit which our Lord designed to be received by the use of that Ordinance.

2. Not to *discern the Lords Body* in eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup, is, not to understand the Nature of that Ordinance, nor our Lords design in it; nor to be suitably affected with the Spiritual Nature and meaning of it.

First, it is not to understand the Nature and End of that Ordinance. As when Men do not understand that the breaking the Lords Body upon the Cross, and the shedding of his Blood as an Expiatory Sacrifice for the sin of the World, is signified, represented, and commemorated by the breaking of Bread, and pouring out of Wine in that Sacrament. And when they do not understand or discern that this Ordinance was appointed by our Blessed Saviour, for a perpetual Commemoration of his transcendent Love in dying for us.

Now,

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Now, if no more than this should be meant by not discerning the Lords Body, Men of common Illumination in the things of the Gospel, and by a common Faith concerning them, may undoubtedly escape being guilty of this unworthiness in eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup. For it will not be denyed but that many unregenerate Men may in this sense discern the Lords Body more clearly, and more distinctly, than many of the Regenerate themselves can.

And if, Secondly, by not discerning the Lords Body should be also meant, (as I suppose it is) the unsuitableness of Mens Affection to the Spiritual Nature of the things represented by eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup, yet Men by common Grace may in some measure discern the Lords Body, by having some degree of Affection suitable to the Spiritual Nature and Design of that Ordinance. In the sense now under consideration, Men do not discern the Lords Body in receiving this
Sacra-

Sacrament, when they are no more Affected with Love and Gratitude to our Blessed Saviour for his great Love in dying for us, than as if there had never been any such thing suffered by him, and for such an end as the Redemption of the World.

But now Men who have but *initial* Faith and common Grace, may eat that Bread, and drink that Cup of the Lord with a much more suitable frame of Mind and Affection than this comes to. For they may at such a time, and upon such an Occasion, have some sense of Christs Love upon their Minds in dying for them, and some hope of being saved by his Death, and for that reason they may have some degree of Love and Affection to him stirring in them, even such as may draw some grateful acknowledgment of his Love from them, and some present purposes of Living more to him, such as may cause them to sin less, until that sense is worn off. When our Saviour saith, *He that loveth Father or Mother more than*

144 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
than me, is not worthy of me, Mat. 10.
37. He supposeth some may Love
him to a degree, who yet love some-
what else more, and thereby make
themselves unworthy of the Salva-
tion which is by him.

Now, such a sense of Christs Love
as this which Men but of common
Grace may have at their coming to
the Sacrament, has a very fair ten-
dency in it towards such a sense and
such Love which is saving indeed,
and is in a very near Capacity of be-
ing so improved as to become such,
and doubtless is so in many a one.
For which cause such should be en-
couraged to frequent this Sacrament
as often as they have Opportunity,
with the best Preparation they can
make.

3. To be guilty of the Body and
Blood of the Lord, (as all they are,
who eat that Bread, and drink that
Cup unworthily, *1 Cor. 11.*) can sig-
nifie no less, and it may be no more,
than a being guilty of a Profaning of
his Body and Blood by using and
receiving

receiving the Sacred Symbols and Signs thereof, with a frame of Mind altogether unsutable to what is signified and represented thereby. And this Men are guilty of when they are no otherwise affected at the Commemoration of the Death of Christ in the Sacrament, than as if his Death had been the Death but of a common Man, nor are no more Affected with the things represented by that Sacrament in the eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup, than as if they were but at a common Meal. They are thus guilty, when they are stupid, sottish, and irreverent at that Action, and void of an affecting sense of the wonderful Love of our Saviour in laying down his Life for us; even then when they make use of that Ordinance which was purposely instituted to perpetuate and preserve a lively sense of it in Christians to the end of the World.

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This Profaning the Body and Blood of the Lord thus, is, as we may easily perceive, a sin of the same Nature with that of not discerning the Lords Body in eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup, and is *resolved* into it, as *all unworthily* receiving that Sacrament is, as it should seem by St. Paul's words, when he assigns the not discerning the Lords Body, as the reason why Men at any time eat that Bread, and drink that Cup *unworthily*, in the 29. ver.

But now Men by common Illumination and Faith, are very capable of discerning a great difference between the Person and Death of Christ, and the Reason and End of his Death, and the Person and Death of other Men; and between the reason of eating and drinking at the Lords Table, and their eating and drinking at other Tables; and of being otherwise Affected with these things than with common things.

Con-

Considering then that the unworthy eating of that Bread, and drinking that Cup, of which the Apostle speaks, consists in such an unfuitable frame of Mind in doing so, as by reason of which Men do not discern the Lords Body, but Profane it and the sacred Signs and Symbols of it: And considering likewise that the Apostle makes the danger of thus eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup unworthily, the reason of his Exhorting them to examine themselves before they come to that Supper; it is easie to understand what the Apostle would have them examine themselves about in Order to their Communicating at the Table of the Lord. • And it is about these things especially as I conceive, *viz.* whether they understand the Nature of that Ordinance, and for what end our Lord did Institute it. And whether they are like to find themselves Affected with a sense of that great Love of Christ in dying for them, which is Represented and

148 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
Commemorated in that Sacrament :
And whether they do not judge him
most worthy of their Love and
Thanks for such Love of his to
them : And whether they do not
judge it fit and reasonable that they
should live unto him, who dyed for
them : And whether and how far
they do endeavour to do so.

And *St. Paul* had a little before his
Exhorting them to examine them-
selves, represented to them the Na-
ture and End of that Ordinance ac-
cording to its first Institution ; to
the end they might examine them-
selves by it, whether they had ap-
prehensions suitable to it, and that
they might the better know how to
govern and demean themselves in the
use of it.

Now, if after all this, we should
look into those outward Acts of un-
worthiness, for which *St. Paul*
greatly blames those of this Church,
telling them that their Communica-
ting

ting in that manner, *was not to eat the Lords Supper*, and for which, and for not discerning the Lords Body, he says, that *many were weak and sickly among them, and many dead*, we shall find that Men but of common Grace may easily avoid being guilty of like abuses.

• The first Abuse of this kind the Apostle takes Notice of, *was their Schismaticalness* in the use of this Ordinance, by which they defeated in a manner one great end of it. In Chap. 11. ver. 17. he charges their coming together in their Church-Assemblies, to be *not for the better, but for the worse*. And this he did upon this account, because when *they came together in the Church, there were Divisions among them*, ver. 18. And in ver. 20. he told them, That *this was not to eat the Lords Supper, to Communicate so dividedly as it seems they did*. For in ver. 21. he saith, *every one taketh before other his own Supper*. By which

190 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
words considered with their relation
to the Context, several Authors
have understood the Schismatical
Practice of the several Parties into
which that Church was divided, in
Communicating apart one from ano-
ther. For although they came to-
gether in one place to do it, yet so,
as that one Party made an end of
their Communicating before ano-
ther had begun theirs. I will instance
in such Authors for this, against which
the *Dissenters* can have least Ex-
ception. *Carrwright*, upon the place
in his Confutation of the *Rhemists*
Translation of the New Testament,
delivers his sense thus. *There was a
double Abuse among them: One in
their Love Feasts, &c. while that which
should have served for the knitting
the knot of Love, was used to cut the
Cord thereof, in that every one as him-
self listed, made choice of such as he
would have to sit at Table with him,
the other either not tarried for, or
thrust out when they came, especially
the Poor. The other Abuse pulled in
by*

by the former, was, for that those which were Companions at one Table in the Common Feast, Communicated also in the Sacred with the same Separation and severalty. Dr. Mayor saith thus: It seems this good Order was perverted among the Corinthians, one Company being of one Sect coming before another, and receiving the Lords Supper and this their own Supper, in a most scandalous manner departed; and then came another Company doing likewise. Mr. Sam. Cradock, in his Apostolical History, pag. 72. delivers his sense thus: In those their Feasts of Charity, at the end whereof the Lords Supper was Celebrated, they did not now observe the true Church Communion; but every one, that is, every Faction or Division being come to the place of the Assembly, did presently sit down to eat what they brought in company of their own Party, not minding or regarding others; whereupon this Holy Feast was neither Celebrated at the same time by all, nor in Holy Car-

152 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
cord, contrary to the true Union of
Christians signified thereby. Unto
which I might add the Dutch An-
nuitators upon the place. Own Sup-
per, that is, a Supper which is not held
in Common of the whole Church, as
the Lords Supper must be held, but
which is held privately by some alone.
Every one, that is, every one that
hold with them. And St. Paul's words
in ver. 33, 34. seem strongly to
back the Interpretation and sense of
these Authors. His words are these;
Wherefore my Brethren, when ye come
together to eat, tarry one for another,
that ye come not together to condem-
nation. Now, unless one Party had
Feasted and Communicated together
before another; there would have
been no occasion for this Admoni-
tion, of tarrying one for another;
unless we could suppose that the In-
dividuals did eat their own Supper
and the Lords Supper singly and apart
from all the rest; which is no ways
likely, so long as they had those of
their own Party to Associate them-
selves

selves with: That phrase of their coming *together to eat*, shews they did not eat singly and apart.

This Sacrament by tending to awaken the sense of Christs love to all his members, one as well as another, by dying for them all, tends to Unite and Knit them all one to another in mutual love, as co-partners together in the same benefits by his death, and to render them all dear one to another, because they were ~~so~~ to him when he gave himself for them all, 1 Cor. 10. 17. To use this Sacrament therefore as an Instrument of division as they did, was to pervert the end and use of it, and to Act contradictiously to the good and benefit which our Saviour designed his People by it.

Considering then that their communicating thus dividedly, was that which made their coming together to be, not for the better, but for the worse, ver. 17. 18. and to be a coming to-

154 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
gether for condemnation, ver. 33,
34. it highly concerns those amongst
us who divide themselves in their
Sacramental communion from their
Brethren, thorowly to review, and
examine the reasons and grounds up-
on which they do it, lest their
coming together should be found
before God, to be a coming toge-
ther, not for the better, but for the
worse, and a coming together to con-
demnation.

This Factious communicating of
these *Corinthians*, the Apostle we
see did insist on more than on any
other, their Sacramental abuses, re-
peating this, and concluding with
a particular caution, and admonition
against it; which is more than he
did concerning any other of them.

And yet this Schismatical com-
municating was such as Christians
by vertue of common grace may
easily avoid the like, as every one
will grant.

The

The other abuses at their Feasts of Charity, and at the Sacrament, were their neglecting and despising their poor Brethren, and suffering them to hunger, when at the same time they made themselves guilty of intemperance and excess; *one is hungry, another is drunk, despise ye the Church of God, and shame them which have not?* These also were such unworthy Acts, as Christians by common grace may easily keep themselves from being guilty of the like.

Now all these outward Acts of unworthiness proceeded from their not rightly discerning the Lords Body, as we may well conceive, either as not understanding the nature of the Ordinance, or as not being duly affected with what was represented and commemorated by it. And therefore for remedy for time to come, he puts them upon examining themselves, concerning the apprehensions, the sense and affection,

M 2

which

156 *Of Visible Church-Membership,*
which Christians ought to have
touching those things, when they go
to the Table of the Lord. I shall
not proceed to shew how each of
these external Acts of unworthy
communicating proceeded from their
not discerning the Lords Body, which
yet might easily be done.

Upon the whole matter I think we
may conclude, that if men by exami-
nation find themselves in a capacity
and disposition, to answer our Lords
end, in this his institution, by eat-
ing and drinking at his Table in a
grateful remembrance of him, that
then they are not altogether un-
fit and unworthy to be Communicants
of it. For men receive the Sacra-
ment worthily or unworthily, ac-
cording as they do or do not thereby
answer the end and design of it, in
remembering our blessed Saviour.

Q U E R Y

QUERY X.

WHy, and for what reason may it be conceived, does Almighty God own and allow others to be of the Church as Visible, than only such as are of the Church as Invisible.

There are several things offer themselves to our consideration which seem to render it fit, and reasonable, and well-becoming the wisdom and goodness of God that it should be so, and such as render it highly useful and beneficial unto men. As,

1. Because it tends more abundantly to increase the number of Invisible Church Members, than it would if none should be admitted into the Visible Church, until they were of the Invisible, or worthily reputed to be so. That it has this tendency, needs
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no better proof than the Experience the Church of God has had of the happy effect of this way and method of converting men, above what has been produced in the other way. Experience has made it manifest, that abundant more thorough and sound conversions in men have been made *in* the Visible Church than *out* of it, and *after* they have been baptized, than *before*. More in the Church of God have been made good, and that by means of their being in it, than have been made so before they were admitted into it. How rarely have any thorough and sound conversions been wrought in men while out of the Church since Miracles ceased? How seldom do we see or hear of any Jews, or profest Infidels become really holy and good men, tho' they live among Christians. and where they have the opportunity of hearing the Gospel if they had any mind to it? When as, thanks be to God, we have known or heard of multitudes of Conversions of this nature that have been wrought
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in men after they have been in the Church.

If the Apostles in their time did by vertue of their Ministry convert many so as of bad to make them really holy and good, before they were received into the Church : Yet as their Calling was *extraordinary*, so was their Ministry by which those Conversions were wrought ; their Mission and Doctrine being attested to come from heaven by multitudes of miraculous operations, and marvelous gifts. And therefore those Conversions which were wrought by such extraordinary means, must be looked upon as extraordinary Conversions: And to argue from things extraordinarily done, to a necessity of having the like done in ordinary cases, and under ordinary means, is so absurd, and such a piece of unreasonableness, as those we call *Seekers* are guilty of, who can find, as they think, no true Churches extant or visible, because not called by men qualified with like extraordinary gifts as those, or many of those in the Apostles

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Apostles days were, by whom Churches were then gathered, And indeed, had not the means by which the Apostles converted those whom they did convert, been *extraordinary*, it would have been in a manner impossible for them to have succeeded in their undertaking as they did, considering that they were to convert them from other Religions in which they had been educated and brought up, and which they had received from their Fathers and Fore-fathers, unto a new Religion, the Christian Religion, which was so greatly different from theirs as it was; especially from that of *Paganism*, from which most of their Conversions probably were made.

But when the Apostles had in this extraordinary way gathered our Saviour a Church all over the known World, and settled particular Churches, it was not necessary, as the Event shews, that this extraordinary way of converting men should be continued. For when by this extraordinary means of converting men way was made

made for converting them in an ordinary way, then that which was extraordinary ceased : Like as the giving the Israelites *Manna* from heaven ceased when they came into *Canaan*, and had opportunity of being supplied with food in an ordinary way. And from that time forward there have been but few Conversions made in those without the Church, but most of those that have been made in bringing men to the power of godliness, have been made upon those within the Visible Church.

For tho God is pleased, I doubt not, to plant true saving grace in some in their early days by the benefit of godly Education : yet there are very many others, who having been received into the Church by Baptism in their Infancy, have little or nothing more than a form of godliness (if so much) found in them when grown up. But among these there are many who in time are brought on, or converted to the Power of Godliness by means of their being in the Church, and unde

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those Ordinances of God there administered, by which he is wont to work saving grace in men. This is Gods ordinary way of Conversion, since that which was extraordinary ceased: And ever since that time, almost all the Conversions that have been made in men to a saving Christian faith, and to a faithful practice and the Power of Christianity, have been made upon persons baptized and within the Church.

And altho the Conversion of men to Christianity by the Ministry of the Apostles was extraordinary, because wrought in an extraordinary way, and by extraordinary means, as I have shewed: yet we have great reason to think that those Conversions, or many of them that proved effectual at last, were but only beginnings, and preparatory to a second and thorow Conversion of them while they were yet without the visible Church, and were carried quite through, and made effectual after they were brought into the Church by Baptism.

And

And the manner of the Apostles writing to the Christians after they had been in the Church for some time, seems to intimate that the Apostles themselves had no other apprehensions of those Conversions, or many of them. For we find them earnestly persuading those Christians to put away such practices, the retaining of which could not well consist with a thorow and sound conversion: Which argues, that at least many of them had not yet put them off, tho they had been for some time in the Church. Thus Col. 3. 8, 9. *But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth, Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds:* That is, they had engaged to do so in Baptism. See the like again, Ephes. 5. 3. And 1 Pet. 2. 1. *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings; as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby:* 1 Cor. 6. 15. *Know ye*

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Not that your bodies are the members of Christ: Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an Harlot? God forbid. What, know ye not that he that is joyned to an harlot, is one body? Chap. 10. 21, 22. Ye cannot drink the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of devils: Ye cannot be partakers of the Lords Table, and of the Table of Devils? Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? Chap. 15. 33, 34. Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame. 2 Cor. 6. 16, 17. What agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? For ye are the Temple of the living God. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, Chap. 12. 20, 21. For I fear lest when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes,

strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: and lest when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness which they have committed. Phil. 2.22. All seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ.

So by the general Epistle which St. James wrote, not to any particular Church, but to the twelve Tribes scattered abroad, it appears that he was very jealous and suspicious, that the faith which very many of the Christians had, was but a *dead and unavailable faith*, and such as would neither justify nor save them: because it was but a barren and unfruitful faith, such as did neither purify the heart, nor reform the life, *being hearers of the Word, and not doers*. For for all their knowledge and their faith, it seems by the tenour of his writing, that their lusts remained still lusty and strong, that warred in their members: The love of pleasure, their

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unworthy compliances to keep friendship with the World, pride, envy, and grudging one against another, strife, and contention, and uncharitable judging and condemning one another, and provoking one another with their unruly Tongues, and cursing and swearing, and such like distempers it seems did abound among them. And St. James by this Epistle to them endeavours their thorow Conversion; and encourageth the sincere among them to endeavour it likewise, saying, *If any see his brother err, and one convert him: Let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and oover a multitude of sins.* And when we likewise find that there were but a few names in Sardis but what had defiled their Garments; having indeed a name to live, but were dead; and nothing which our Saviour could commend in all the Church of *Ladicea*; I say, when we find this, and consider all these things, and more of like nature in the Apostles Writings, we

we have great reason to think that many of those whom the Apostles baptized, were not thorowly converted till after they were brought into the Church, and yet many such were so after.

And indeed I do not know what other reason can be given why the Apostles made such haste as they did to baptize persons after they had once gained their consent to turn Christians, without staying for any farther trial, but that they thought their thorow Conversion was more likely to be effected within the Church than without. It is one thing to be converted from a false Religion to a bare or notitional belief of the true, and another thing to be converted from that to a right practical belief of it. There were some who did believe in the former sense through the power of conviction, and could do no otherwise, who yet had no mind to become obedient to the Rules and Precepts of the Gospel in all things. Such were those *Joh. 2.23.* and those *Joh. 12.42, 43.*

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and such was *Simon Magus*, and such were those, of whom *St. James* speaks, that had but a dead faith : And thus it is with many that are of the Visible Church in these days, who have no other faith for some time, and yet afterward are converted to a lively practical belief of the Christian Religion. And it is probable, that the faith of most of the Apostles Converts went little or nothing farther than to a general belief of the truth of the Apostles Doctrine until after they were baptized; they having so little time of learning before as generally they had, but were carried on further to a more particular distinct and practical belief by after-teaching when they were in the Church. And this is not disagreeable to what I have formerly noted from the words of our Saviours Commission to his Apostles touching a double teaching ; the one to make men become Disciples, which went before Baptism, the other to direct them how to live as Christians, which followed after it, *Mat. 28. 19, 20.*

But

But however, whatever thorow and effectual Conversions the Apostles might in an extraordinary way effect in men while they were without the Church for the first founding of the Christian Church ; yet we are sure that since that extraordinary way of Conversion has been discontinued, abundantly more have been converted by their being in the Church, and by advantage of the means of conversion which they have there enjoyed, than have been among those without the Church. And this is the first reason assigned why others should be admitted into the Visible Church than such as are of the Invisible, or than are reputed to be so before such admission.

2. Another reason why we may conceive Almighty God allows many others to be of the Visible Church than are of the Invisible, is, because so to do is more useful for the propagating and spreading of the Christian Religion in the World, than the limiting and restraining the Visible Church

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Church only to those who are of the Invisible also, can be. For it cannot be denied but that such gifts, and such common grace as will not be sufficient unto a mans own Salvation, may yet be very useful for the maintaining and defending the Christian Doctrine against Adversaries, and for the instructing others in it, and for the persuading them to believe it, and to live according to it. Which was the reason, I suppose, why *St. Paul* said, that *he rejoiced, and would rejoyce that Christ was preached, tho it were but insincerely by some, as well as for being preached in truth by others, Phil. i. 18.* For the more men of Parts, and Learning, and of Interest among men the Christian Religion and sound Doctrine has to assert and defend it, and the more there are of others to abet and encourage them in it, (though many of them shall be supposed to be mainly influenced therein by motives of secular honour and interest) the more credit in general, and the more reputation it will have in the World, and the

the further it will spread. As we see on the contrary, the more Popery has had men of parts, and learning, and of interest otherwise to promote and propagate it, the more and the farther it hath spread and prevailed in the World: And the same is true of other Errors and Heresies; as that of *Arianism* when time was. There is no question, but the more good men are backt in their promulging sound and saving Doctrine by men of great interest in the World, that agree with them in Doctrine and substance of Worship (tho they should not in all respects be so hearty and sincere as the other are,) the more Christian Religion gains among men.

And if all such as these should be made enemies to the Church by being denied to be of it, the Churches power of propagating the Christian Religion would quickly be thereby exceedingly weakened, and the propagation thereof greatly obstructed. We have not now Miracles, the extraordinary means by which Christianity
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was at first propagated; without which it is not probable the unbelieving and blind world would have been reconciled to it upon account of its own intrinsick excellency and goodness. And therefore there is now the more need of the help of all Christians to propagate the Christian Religion: Not only of such as are of the Invisible Church, and Visible likewise, but also of those who are but only of the Visible. The success in propagating the Christian Religion, does not wholly depend upon the moral goodness of the Instruments by whom it is done, but so much upon its own goodness, that if that be but sufficiently discovered, tho' but by men defective in their Morals, it is yet able to commend itself very much unto the choice of men. *If they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil ways, saith God concerning the false Prophets, Jer. 23. 22.*

It is no small matter upon this account

count to be born within the Pale of the Visible Church of Christian Parents, and to be educated in the Christian Religion, though by Parents too much strangers to the power of it, *And of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her, The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there, Psal. 87. 5, 6.*

How many worthy Children has the Church had, and of great use in it, who yet have been born of Parents of but small account for Religion, So that such mens being of the Church, is of great use for the propagating of truly religious men, and by them the Christian Religion. But if such men as these had been deprived of Church education by their Parents being deprived of Membership in the Visible Church, the Church in all probability would have been deprived of such useful Members as these prove to be for the propagating of the true Christian Religion.

3. Another reason may be, because to take others into the Visible Church than such as are, or are credibly reputed

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to be of the Invisible, tends much more to the security of the Invisible Church in the world than the excluding all such would do. For were it not for those of the Church as Visible over and besides such as are of it as Invisible, those which are of the Church as Invisible would be in much more danger than now they are, of being devoured by those numerous enemies which they have in the world. *Christ's Flock is but a little flock* comparatively; and there are but few that find the narrow way that leads to life, as he hath told us. And so he hath told us also in the Parable of the Sower, that of four sorts of hearers of the Gospel, there is but one that brings forth fruit: And in another place, that among the many that are called, there are but few chosen.

Now then, if when with the help of those of the Visible Church which are not of the Invisible, (which yet according to the Scriptures seem to be far the greater number) those of the Invisible Church have enough to do

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to subsist in the world without being rooted out of it by the Enemies of Christianity, as we see they have, what can we think would become of them but ruine without a standing Miracle to secure them, if those who are but only of the Visible Church were made Enemies also to those of the Invisible, as doubtless they would if they should all be rejected by them as none of Christs Church on earth? How unable would they be to defend themselves against the Popish Party in the world, if they were not assisted by those who are but of the Church as Visible? Or how unable would they be to defend themselves against all those that are Enemies to Christianity both name and thing, if the bulk and body of men, which are Christians only in outward Form and Profession, did not stand as a screen between them and those enemies?

Our Saviour hath declared that the Wheat would be in great danger of being rooted up if the Tares should for the present be gathered out of it ;
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and for that reason *would have both to grow together till the harvest*, Mat.13. Our Saviour did not intend hereby (no more do I by what I have said) to put a bar against purging the Church of Capital Offenders by Discipline, and therefore by *Tares* its probable he meant carnal Gospellers that yet are not obnoxious to Excommunication, such as the thorny-ground hearers, in whom the Cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of Riches, and Pleasures of this Life, choak the Word which they have received, and which they profess, so that it brings forth in them no fruit to perfection.

But before I proceed any farther I must remove an Objection, which otherwise lies against the use which I here make of this Parable of our Saviour. And the Objection is this; That this Parable makes nothing against gathering the bad from among the good in the *Church*, but from among the good in the *World*; Not that they should both grow together in the Church till Harvest, but in the World.

World. And to strengthen this they alledge our Saviours interpretation of this Parable, where he says, that the *Field* where the Tares and the Wheat grow together, is the *World*, Mat. 13. 38.

And this indeed at first sight seems to be a very considerable Objection. But if we consider the matter well, I think it may appear otherwise. The *Field* indeed in which the Seed was sown, and the Gospel first preached, was the *World*, according to our Saviours Commission to his Apostles; *Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel*, Mar. 16. 15. But then those that received this Seed of the Gospel, so as to make profession of adhering to it, were presently baptized and received into the Church. Now it was among these that the Tares sprang up, many of them proving bad Christians. So that the Seed was first sown in the World as in a common field: But yet the Tares sprang up in that part of the world which was now become the Visible Church, and an enclosed

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Garden. And therefore when the time of the Harvest shall come when these Tares must be separated from the Wheat, our Saviour says, *They shall be gathered out of the Kingdom of the Son of Man*, Ver. 41. where they were permitted to grow till this Harvest. And what is this Kingdom of the Son of Man, but his Visible Church? The History of the Event of the Apostles Preaching, does plainly lay open the meaning of this Parable, and that of the Draw-net, and other like Parables, in that the Visible Church which they gathered out of the world, consisted of bad as well as good.

And this Parable in particular shews further that these Tares were not to be gathered out of the Church, for this very reason, *Lest while ye gather up the Tares, saith he, ye root up also the Wheat with them.* So that it seems that the Tares growing with the Wheat is in some respect matter of security to the Wheat, and that the Wheat would be in more danger by the Tares being gathered from among
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it, than by their growing together with it : in more danger of bein rooted up, or rooted out. And this seems fully to justifie and make good that reason I am now upon, why all unregenerate Christians should not be denied a place and being in the Visible Church.

If it shall be hear said, that the Church in the Primitive times, when but few in number, did yet subsist, yea, and abundantly increase too, tho they had no humane or worldly Power to defend them, and when almost the whole world both of Jews and Gentiles were against them : And why may it not as well do so now, tho none that are not of the Invisible Church should be any defence unto it.

I answer, that there is no doubt but that they might subsist in the world, continue and increase as well as they did, provided they had but the same extraordinary means to back and abet them, and to increase their numbers, as those Primitive Christians had : I mean those miraculous Powers which then procured the Christians great re-
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putation among the People, and which
did still attract and draw in more to
their Party than were diminished by the
Persecution which was raised against
them by the higher Powers which were
then Infidel. For by reason of those mira-
culous wonders which were done by
the Apostles and others in those times,
the multitude of People were so asto-
nished and affected, that they favoured
them so far as that the Rulers were put
under some awe. For we read that for
the reason aforesaid, *great grace or fa-
vour was upon them all, to wit, all the
Christians, Acts 4. 33. And Chap.*
*5. 13. its said, that the people magni-
fied them.* So that the Rulers when
they had otherwise a mind to it, *found
not how to punish them because of the
people, for all men glorified God for that
which was done, Chap. 4. 21. And in
Chap. 5. 26. its said of the Captain
and Officers that were sent to bring
the Apostles before the Council, that
they brought them without violence,
because they feared the people lest they
should have been stoned.* And by reason
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of the credit they obtained among the people both to themselves and their way by the numerous Miracles they wrought; *believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women* notwithstanding all the opposition which was made against them by the Rulers, *Chap. 5. 14.* And that wonderful increase of Believers which was made from among the Heathen also, was attributed by *St. Paul* unto those Signs and Wonders that were wrought for the proof and confirmation of the Christian Way, *I will not dare, saith he, to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty Signs and Wonders by the Spirit of God, Rom. 15. 18, 19.*

But if the small number of sincere Christians that are in the world, had no other means to preserve themselves and to increase their number but the goodness of their Cause, and their own Innocency, and were not countenanced and protected by Christian

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States and Governours, and by a multitude more of the same Profession with themselves than are of like sincerity in that Profession; they would be in great danger of being in a manner extirpated out of the world by the Infidel and Antichristian Parties in it. When the Papal defection befel the Church within the *Roman Empire*, the greatest part perhaps of the then Visible Church in that part of the world, fell off from the Orthodox and sincere, and became their Enemies in time. The consequence of which was the exterminating and rooting out of that part of the world, in a great measure, the Orthodox and sincere Christians. Which is a great instance to shew how it would fare with those of the Invisible Church, if they were deserted by those Christians which are not of it, or if those were rejected as no fellow-members of the Visible Church, and thereby made their Enemies.

4. Another reason is taken from the danger in another respect of reckoning

reckoning none of the Church as Visible, but upon the reputation of their being of the Church as Invisible: For to admit men upon no other terms into the Visible Church, nor to its Communion, but upon the reputation, and under the Notion of their being already of the Church as Invisible, tends greatly to betray many Souls into a dangerous snare of self-deceiving. For, if this rule of admission should be observed, many mistakes would be committed either through fallibility or partiality of judgment in them that admit them; and so, many would be received into the Visible Church, ~~only~~ to the Communion of it as Members of the Invisible, which yet are not of it. And if so, then all those which are thus received under the approbation of the Visible Church as Members of the Invisible, will be thereby *strengthened* in their *self-flattery* and good opinion they have of themselves touching their good and safe condition, when there is no such matter. And when they

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find the good opinion they have of themselves thus strengthened by the publick judgment of the Church concurring with them therein, they will be under the greater temptation, and in so much the greater danger of resting securely in that unsafe condition, to the great hazard of their Souls. We know, or have abundant reason to suspect, that many that have but a Form of Godliness, are *Laodicean* like, less apt to suspect the goodness of their own condition before God, than they that are truly sincere: How much less will they suspect it, and how much more will they be confirmed in the good opinion of themselves, tho' false, when they have the publick judgment of the Church to back them in it, and that after inspection has been made into their lives, and signs of their Conversion approved of? As the manner is of those that go that way.

Of this danger, and of this great inconvenience, some of the *New England* Divines grew sensible after they had

had made trial of that way a great while. For in their answer to Mr. Davenports *Apologetical Preface*, pa. 43, 44. they express themselves in these words: *Indeed, when men confound these two, and do tie Visible Church Interest unto such conditions and qualifications as are reputed enough to Salvation, this may tend to harden men, and to make them conceit, that if once they be but got into the Church they are sure of heaven, when as alas it may be they are far from it.*

But now there is no such danger does arise from mens being owned Visible Church Members from their professing to believe the Christian Religion, and from their Covenanting to endeavour to live according to it. Such Profession and such Covenanting does indeed give ground of hope to the Church, that such will not be so regardless of their own Salvation as not to be willing to learn their duty, and to endeavour to do it that they may be saved. But yet such hope of the Church concerning their good performance

performance for the future, does not minister any occasion of confidence in such men that they have *already* performed what is necessary to their Salvation, as a receiving them into the Church, and unto Communion, as having in the publick judgment of the Church already performed it, would do. This act of the Church in receiving them into Communion in her external priviledges in hope of their improving them to the saving of their Souls, gives them no ground of confidence of the safety and goodness of their condition thereby, further than they are careful *to make their Calling and Election sure by using all diligence* in improving the opportunity and means of doing so by their being in the Church.

Men are too prone to lay too great a stress upon their being received into the Visible Church and Communion, tho the Church hath past no judgment thereby of their being of the Invisible Church: how much more would they do so in case it had,

St. Paul

St. Paul was sensible, I doubt not, how prone many Christians are to lay too much stress meerly upon their being of the Church, and partakers in the external Communion thereof; For which cause he cautioned the Christians against flattering themselves with an opinion of their safe condition upon that account, and laboured to possess them with a sense of the danger they were in for all that, if they should rest therein without growing better and better thereby, 1 Cor. 10. *I would not, saith he, that ye should be ignorant, brethren, how that all our Fathers were baptized unto Moses in the Cloud, and in the Sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink; and yet with many of them God was not well pleased, but overthrew them in the Wilderneck. And he told them that these things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they lusted. Then enumerated their miscarriages, and what befel them thereupon: and further told them, that these things hapned*

happened to them for Examples or Types to us, and were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. Thereby giving them to understand, that tho they were baptized and received into the Church, and did participate of the same spiritual meat and drink in the Sacrament with the best in the Church; yet if they did not take warning by the miscarriages of those that had been of the Church, and of the Communion of it as well as they, to avoid the like, they might perish as well as the other did, for all their Communion in the Church.

5. Another reason against refusing all such Communion in the Visible Church who are not judged to be of the Church as Invisible, is taken from the danger of such a practice in another respect, and that is the danger of mistaking the good for bad, and of refusing the sincere Christians under the Notion of Carnal and Unregenerate. There is so little visible difference between what many of the same

same persons were a little before they had saving grace, and what they are when they have it only in the lowest degree; that men would be in great danger of mistaking if they should make a judgment of their spiritual state under such Circumstances. And the difficulty of not mistaking in this case will be still increased, when that very little of true grace which is in some men, is greatly obscured by the coarseness of their natural temper and disposition. Besides the prejudice which some good men have against others upon account of some difference in Opinion, will not suffer them to discern true grace in some of them in whom it is, and perhaps in some good degree too. This Age hath furnished us with too many instances of this nature. The like may be said in respect of the *narrowness of spirit, and severity* of many, by reason of which many of those in whom God himself finds saving grace, would be refused Communion with the Church for want of it, if that opinion should generally obtain,

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do say, the Universal Church differs from a particular Church in two respects.

1. The Universal Church differs from a particular, as the whole differs from a part, and a particular Church differs from the Universal, as a part differs from the whole. For otherwise they are materially the same, only with this difference, the one contains all Visible Church matter, and the other but a part of it. There is nothing necessary to qualify the matter of which a particular Church doth consist, than what made all the Members of it Members of the Universal Church, unless it be what belongs to the Officers of it as such.

2. If by a particular Church we understand one single Congregation, then a particular Church differs from the Universal as those of, which it does consist, do assemble together in one place for Publick Worship, which the Universal Church cannot do now, tho in the beginning of its existence possibly it might. But if by a particular Church

Church we understand so many single worshipping Congregations as are united under one and the same Church Government and Governours in a City, Province, or Kingdom ; Then a particular Church in this sense is differenced from the Church Universal by this Ecclesiastical Polity under which it is otherwise united than the Universal Church, as such, is or can be. And such a particular Church we suppose the Church in *Jerusalem*, in *Corinth*, and in other great Cities to have been, the Scripture so accounting them, when yet each of them consisted of more single worshipping Assemblies than one, as may well be presumed on several accounts, not here to be mentioned.

There is another thing which the Congregationalists make essential to the being of a particular Church (for they make it the Form or formal cause of it) which would be another difference between the Universal Church and a particular, if their Opinion and Assertion were admitted concerning it,

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and that is their *Church Covenant* or
mutual engagement to walk together in
the way and order of the Gospel. And
by this each one of their single Con-
gregations distinguisheth it self from
all other. And they account this so
necessary, as to make it a condition
of Communion without which they
will not admit persons otherwise well
approved of by themselves to Sacra-
mental Communion, that is, unless
they are under this engagement to
them or some other Sister Church of
the same kind.

But this is so much the worse, be-
cause it is done and required under
the Notion of Divine appointment,
when God has appointed no such
thing. Which is such a piece of su-
perstition as the enjoying the use of
the Ceremonies of the Church of
England is free from, so long as they
are not enjoyed as things of divine
appointment, but only as of an in-
different nature, and therefore there
is no such reason to scruple them as
there is to scruple this practice upon
those terms. There

There are two Texts of Scripture upon which more especially and principally they ground this opinion and practice of theirs ; which I shall a little enquire into. The one is 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. which Dr. O. to this end quotes more than once in his late Book ; the words are these : *And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.* The *Us*, here in the Text, are St. Paul and *Timotheus*, from whom this Epistle came, *Chap.* 1. 1. And if so, how could the Churches of *Macedonia's*, giving themselves to St. Paul and *Timothy*, possibly signifie their mutual Covenanting one with another among themselves? And is it not as strange also that they should give themselves to Paul and Timothy in order to the Constituting themselves Churches, when as that giving themselves to Paul and Timothy, here spoken of, was done then when they were already Churches, as the whole Context from *ver.* 1. doth shew. And if their giving themselves to Paul and

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Timothy was one of those things which they did, more than *Paul* and *Timothy* hoped for, then such a confederation is not likely to be meant by it as was essentially necessary to their existence as Churches; this certainly would not have been more than they hoped for, if it had been their duty, and of so great a necessity. This is enough to shew how impertinently this Scripture is alledged. But the whole Context shews that the things *St. Paul* here speaks of, were quite of another nature, and that is the liberality of the Churches of *Macedonia* towards the relief of the Christians of *Jerusalem*, and their zeal in being otherwise serviceable to so good a work, wherein they did indeed exceed the expectation of *Paul* and *Timothy*. For their Poverty to which they were brought by suffering for the Gospel was so deep, that *St. Paul* it seems scarce thought it fit to receive any thing of them, and it was upon their earnest intreaty that he did; and yet they did not only thus give above their ability, but
besides

besides their giving up themselves to God as ready to suffer further for him if called to it, they gave up themselves to *St. Paul & Timothy* also to assist them in that charitable work they had in hand, by their further endeavours to promote it among others. For they *intreated Paul and Timothy earnestly, to take upon them the fellowship of ministering to the Saints*, the managing of that affair, and procured them to send *Titus* to *Corinth* to promote the same business as appears by *ver. 6.*

This Scripture though so great a stranger to this opinion as you see, yet is that which so far as ever I could perceive, is chiefly depended upon in this cause. They bring in also, as favouring their notion and practice, the saying of *St. Peter* to the Christians; *ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house an holy Priesthood, &c. 1 Pet. 2. 5.* And they do, it seems, suppose that these living stones being so laid together as to make a spiritual house, is done by their Confederation and Covenant, as

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the Cement by which the Christians were united and combined in one particular Church, fitly framed together, as the phrase is, *Ephes. 2.*

But St. Peter is not here speaking to any one particular Church as such, when he says ye are built up a spiritual house, but to the strangers scattered abroad throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, as appears *Chap. 1.1.* And no one surely can think that these Christians thus scattered, and at this distance, could become one particular Church by such a mutual Confederation as these hold necessary for the forming a particular Church. And if not, it must be by vertue of somewhat else than such a particular Church Covenant as these dissenting Brethren thought to find here, by which Christians in so many distant parts of the world, as aforesaid, were built up one spiritual house. And that doubtless must be the same thing by which all Christians in the world become one spiritual house of God; for so they
are.

are. For when Christ is said to be *High Priest over the house of God*, Heb. 10. 21. *And to be faithful as a Son over his own house*, Heb. 3. 6. House in these places cannot signify less than the Universal Christian Church, who are called *the household of faith*. And how do all these Christians become the house of God, but by being joyned and devored to him by the Baptismal Covenant, and thereby to one another, among whom he dwells and is Worshipped as in his holy Temple: For by this they all become one body, which is but another Metaphor under which to express the same thing, *Ephes. 2, 21, 22. 1 Cor. 12. 13.*

It is the same thing which makes persons Members of the Church Universal, that qualifies them for particular Church Membership; and that is the Baptismal Covenant. And to make any other Covenant besides this so necessary to qualify men for particular Church Membership and Communion, as to make this of Gods own appointment insufficient for that

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end, is a great impeachment of it, and contains in it such consequences as the Abettors of it would be ashamed to countenance if they were aware of it. For so long as it is asserted to be of divine appointment; the *formal cause* of a particular Church, and *essential* to its being, and is made the *Condition* of Communion when God has no where appointed or required it; so long it may be charged with these evils.

1. With a *teaching for Doctrine the Commandments of men*, a piece of vain Worship condemned by our Saviour, *Mat. 15. 9.* which is the same thing with *adding* to Gods Word, or a *saying he saith*, when he *hath not said it*.

2. It is in some sort and in part making void the Command or Institution of God, that men might establish their own Tradition. For whereas the Baptismal Covenant qualifies men for particular Church Membership by bringing them into the Universal Church, this Opinion denies the

the Baptismal Covenant to be sufficient to this end, and sets up this other confederating in its room.

3. It contains in it the Unchurcing of all those Gospel Churches that are, or ever have been in the world, that have not been thus united by Church Covenanting. For to say this is the Form of a particular Church, or the formal cause of it, is in effect to say, that none are really Churches without it; for Matter and Form are essential to the being of Churches as well as they are of other things. Now to Unchurch all Churches that have not been thus confederate, is a great thing indeed, if we consider how few years it is since such Covenanting was heard of in any Christian Church in the world, and by how inconsiderable a number of Congregations it has been used since it has been heard of. These things considered, it is matter of a very venturous and daring nature.

As for the other part of our Enquiry, touching that which makes the difference between one particular Church and

and another, we may conceive of it thus.

1. It consists partly in that which, does distinguish one Town from another, or one great Neighbourhood from another, and that is the bounds of Habitation. And this distinction is as well convenient, yea, necessary for *Ecclesiastical Order*, and peaceable Government, as it is for *Civil*, and does as well accommodate the ends of the one as of the other, and without this, a peaceable and orderly Government in the whole Church would be impracticable, even as it would be in an Universal Empire: And thus the Churches planted by the Apostles, are differenced and distinguished one from another; that at *Rome* from that at *Corinth*, and that at *Ephesus* from that at *Philippi*; yea, that at *Cenchrea* from that at *Corinth*, which yet bordered upon *Corinth*, and so of the rest. And indeed that difference which is made between Church and Church by Vicinity of Neighbourhood and Cohabitation, does best answer the ends of particu-

particular Church Association, such as is assembling together for Publick Worship, and mutual assistances in all Christian offices of Brotherly love and friendship. But this alone does not constitute Christians dwelling together in the same place, a particular Christian Church, tho by their being of the Church Universal, they are as fit matter qualified for it. But

2. That which does constitute such to be a particular Church, as that signifies a company of Christians in Local Communion in Divine Worship, consisting in the participation of Gospel Ordinances, is the placing over them one or more Church-Officers, to minister to them therein. By which Officers, as well as by the place where they dwell, and where they assemble for Worship, they are distinguished from other like Churches under the Conduct of other Church-Officers of the same kind. For by such their joynt Local Communion in the Worship administred by their spiritual Guide or Pastor, they are united with
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him and among themselves, as one Worshipping Congregation; by which Union also they are distinguished from other particular Churches, as other particular Churches in like manner are from them.

Those of the Independent Church-way do indeed hold particular Churches, as such, to be Antecedent to any Church-Officers over them. Which is the reason which Dr. Owen in his *Inquiry concerning Churches*, does alledge to prove the Power of the Keys to be given to the Church. And to prove particular Churches to be Antecedent to Church-Officers, he quotes *Acts 14. 23*, where it is said of Paul and Barnabas; *And when they had ordained them Elders in every Church, &c.* As for this proof of his Assertion, I shall consider it by and by; but shall first examine and try what is in the Assertion it self, which I am inclined to think will be found full of mistake, and that the contrary will be found true, *viz.* that the Evangelical Ministry is, and always has been

been Antecedent to the existence of Christian Churches, and indeed an instrumental cause of their being. And this is true, not only of particular Churches, but also of the Universal Church as Christian, which yet in order of nature is Antecedent to particular Churches. The gathering of Christ a Christian Church in the world at first, was the effect of the Apostolical Ministry and the Ministry of their assistants. The Church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Christ being the chief corner stone, Eph. 2. 20. and the Foundation is Antecedent to the Superstructure. All the additions that have been since made to the Visible Church, have been by the Ministerial Office, by letting all the particular Members of that addition into it by Baptism.

And when men are ordained Ministers of the Gospel, they are not ordained Ministers of this or that particular Church, but Ministers of Christ to the Church in general,

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Let no man glory in men; for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, all are yours, and ye are Christs, 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22. *Paul, Apollos, and Cephas* were theirs in common with others, not theirs appropriately. And their being sent or called to be Ministers to this or that particular Church, is but the application of their general capacity to particular use and exercise, to wit, that of Ministration to such a people in particular. And this Ministerial Power they bring with them to the Church or People among whom they are placed, but do not receive it from them: And it is by virtue of their Ministry and Ministration that a particular Body of people can act or perform any Publick Acts of Communion peculiar to a Church as such. And therefore as they cannot act as a Church without such a Ministry, so neither can they properly be a Church without it. The first thing *St. Paul* mentions, *Ephes. 4. 11, 12.* for which our Saviour Christ gave Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors

Pastors and Teachers, was for the perfecting of the Saints, or for the joining them together, or for the making them up, or for the compacting or knitting them together : For thus variously is that word rendered by Expositors ; but all to the same sense. For it is for the knitting them and holding them together as one body in their several Publick Assemblies for Worship and Edification. And indeed a Church is so called from several Christians assembling together for Publick Worship, their Union wherein is made by their joynt concurrence with their Spiritual Pastor in his Ministration ; for which end and purpose such Officers are given and appointed by Christ, as the words of St. Paul now alledged shew.

And now as for the Text alledged by the Doctor, in which Paul and Barnabas are said to have ordained Elders in every Church, Acts 14. 23. this does not prove the Churches there spoken of to be such Antecedently to any Ministerial Act or Power by which they became such. For they had
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been made Churches in some sort by the planting of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, who also as Church Officers ministred to them while they were among them : For this ordaining : Elders in every Church by *Paul* and *Barnabas*, was done in their return to the places where they had preached the Gospel, and made Disciples before ; and they returned to them to confirm them, and to ordain Elders among them, as appears by the two precedent verses compared with the Text it self. Besides, *St. Luke* did not write this History till after the Apostles had thus ordained Elders in the Churches mentioned by him, so that they were indeed Churches then when he wrote those words, and it was proper for him to stile them so, tho it should be supposed they had been none before they had Elders ordained in them. So that this Text can be no proof of that for which the Doctor doth alledge it.

QUERY

QUERY XII.

WHether from the reason of the extent and Latitude of Visible Church-Membership and Communion which has been discoursed of; the great usefulness of a National settlement or Constitution for the publick exercise of the Worship of God in all parts of a Nation professing Christianity, may not fairly be inferred and concluded?

Now the reason why Visible Church-Membership & Communion are better in respect of their due extensiveness, than they would be if the terms and conditions of enjoying those Priviledges were limited and restrained to the same terms which the enjoyment of Invisible Church Membership and Communion are, is this, viz. because these Priviledges under such an extent and latitude, tend more to the propagation of the Christian Religion, and the increase of the number of those

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who

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who shall be saved, than they would or could do if they were limited and restrained to the same terms and conditions of enjoyment as Invisible Church Membership and Communion are. This hath been shew'd in our tenth Inquiry.

And it is for the same reason that it is better that the exercise of Gods Publick Worship should be set up in all parts of a Nation professing Christianity by a *National Authority*; and that all such Professors should be thereby obliged to frequent it, than it is to leave all such to their own liberty to promote and frequent it, or to forbear and neglect to do so, as the way called *Independency* does. For the *National* way tends more to propagate and promote the knowledge and practice of Christian Religion, and the Salvation of Souls, than the *Congregational* way does, and therefore must needs be abundantly better. That it does so, is too apparent to be denied by any that have but common reason when these things

things following are but duly considered.

x. Better provision is made by a publick establishment for the instruction of such a Nation in the way of Salvation, than can reasonably be expected without it. Unless provision were made by publick Authority for the maintenance of a Gospel Ministry in all parts of a Nation, there would certainly be a greater want of a publick Ministry in many places of it, than by reason of such a publick provision there is. Would people, think we, of themselves in all places of a Nation provide a better maintenance for the Ministry of the Gospel among them, if left wholly to themselves, than there is made by publick Authority? If they would, how comes it to pass that those places are generally worst supplied with Ministers where the Publick has made least provision for their maintenance? And generally where there is the greatest failure in this, there is the least face of Religion, and greatest hazard of mens Souls.

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Where there is no Vision the people perish, saith Solomon, Prov. 29. 18. And the people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, saith the Prophet, Hos. 4.6.

2. If the people should be all left to themselves to chuse what Ministers they please without any publick^d approbation and allowance of some appointed by publick Authority to judge of their fitness, many would be in danger of chusing men of erroneous Principles, and such as would corrupt the minds of men. The consequence of which would be great opposition and contention between the Orthodox and the Erronious, and making of Parties, and endless strife, to the destruction of Peace and Charity, and to the hurt of mens souls thereby, and to the great dishonour of our Religion, and to the hinderance of its good effects upon the minds and lives of men.

3. Altho the Publick Worship should be set up in all places of a Christian Nation, yet if men should
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be under no Obligation by Law to attend it, it would doubtless be much more neglected by many, than when there is. But the more men are brought to attend the means by which God works Grace in them, tho it be but by virtue of the Law they are brought to it, yet the more hope and probability there is of their being savingly wrought upon.

4. It whosoever shall pretend himself qualified for it, should have liberty to gather a Congregation, it would be the leaving open a door of opportunity to Seducers to subvert mens Souls, and to fill a Nation with variety of Sects, and the mischievous effects of them. And yet so it would be if there were no publick Government in the Church to restrain men: And to this day we feel the very sad effects of so great a liberty sometime indulged.

Thus we see for what reason true Religion should be promoted by National Authority. And as to matter of fact it is sufficiently known, that those

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who have had the Supream Power in all Nations have been wont always to promote by their Authority that which they have thought to be the true Religion whether it hath been true or false: And whence comes this but from the light and Law of Nature, which directs men to use the Power and Interest they have to further the Worshipping of the God whom they serve. And indeed Christians of all persuasions are willing enough to have the Civil Power to exert it self in furthering their own way of Worshipping God: The People of *New England*, who once were as much for Liberty of Conscience as any, yet soon found it convenient to incorporate the Civil Power with the Ecclesiastick for the defence and propagation of their Religion.

Now as the great usefulness of a National establishment for the purposes aforesaid, does sufficiently appear from the reason and nature of the thing it self, and has the light and law of Nature on its side; so it is not destitute
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of countenance from supernatural Revelation.

1. When Almighty God said to *Abraham, Thou shalt be a Father of many Nations. a Father of many Nations have I made thee.* Gen. 17. He declared his intention of Reforming the world by degrees from Idolatry and false Worship in a *National* way, if we may judge what he intended to do afterwards, by the first instance he gave of his performance herein; and if we may judge of the true meaning of this as of other Divine Predictions, by the after Events, which answer them in point of fact; which yet is the best and most approved way of understanding Predictions, when such events take place.

Almighty God made *Abraham* first a Father of a Nation which issued out of his own Loyns. For when his Posterity, who by Circumcision Covenanted to take *Abrahams* God only for their God, grew very numerous in *Egypt*, God brought them out thence that they might worship him

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openly and publicly in a National way. And by this means, and by his visible owning them for his people by extraordinary favours shew'd them, he designed to make himself more known to the rest of the world, to be the only true God, and to be so acknowledged.

Now in that *Abraham* was promised to be the Father of many Nations, it was not so much for that, God intended that many Nations should descend out of his Loyns by natural generation, as that many Nations in time should, after his example, come to acknowledge and worship him only for their God as the only true God. For so *St. Paul* understood this promise of God to *Abraham*, when he makes *Abraham*, in respect of his believing in the true God, to be the Father of all Nations that should be of the same belief, as well those of the *Uncircumcision* as that which was of the *Circumcision*, as it is written, saith he, *I have made thee a Father of many Nations*, Rom. 4. 16, 17. And it was in

in this Spiritual or religious respect and sense that *St. Paul* had before in this Chapter asserted *Abraham* to be the Father of all that shall believe in the true God as he did, in all Nations, as well those who were never Circumcised, as those that were, *Ver. 11, 12.* And thus God made *Abraham* a *blessing* to the World as he promised he would, and a Father of Nations, not only for that the *Messias* was to be born of one descended from him; for so he was born of one that descended from *Abraham's* Predecessors and Successors, as well as from *Abraham*: But he was a *blessing* to the World, and the *Father of Nations* by being made by God the Head, the beginning and great example of reforming the World from Misbelief and Idolatry, and other consequent evils, so as his Progenitors were not. To encourage which work in the world, God invested *Abraham*, that led the way herein, with the honour of being counted the Father of Nations, and a publick blessing to the world, both in himself and in his Seed.

2. That

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2. That God did design farther to carry on the reformation of the world from Misbelief and Idolatry in a National way, and in that way to bring the world by degrees to the Worship of the true God only, appears by other Predictions of the Prophets, such as that, *Isa. 55. 5. Behold thou shalt call a Nation that thou knowest not, and Nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee.* Chap. 52. 15. *He shall sprinkle many Nations, the Kings shall shut their mouths at him,* Chap. 49. 24. *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their Queens thy nursing mothers.* Zech. 8. 22. *Many people and strong Nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts,* Chap. 2. 11. *Many Nations shall be joyned to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people.* The formal nature of mens Visible Church-Membership consists in their being visibly joyned to the Lord, as I have shewed; and therefore when many Nations are Nationally joyned to the Lord, they may well be counted Nationally his people, or Churches.

And

And Nations are then Nationally joyned to the Lord, when Nations do incorporate the Christian Religion with their Civil Government, and make it part of the National Government, as the Ecclesiastical Polity of the Jews together with the Judicial Law of that Commonwealth was. And by this means the Christian Religion becomes commodiously and with more certainty to be transmitted to future Generations in a Nation, as well as practised for the time being by that which is existent; just as the Jews Religion was. *For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which he commanded our Fathers that they should make them known to their Children: That the Generation to come might know them, even the Children which should be born: who should arise and declare them to their Children,* Psal. 78. 5; 6.

Those Prophecies fore-mentioned concerning Nations being joyned to the Lord, referring to times under the

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the New Testament, the event of them, as we shall see, will shew that they foretold Christian Nations their being joyned to the Lord *Nationally*, or in the course of National Government, And the nature of Events which answer to divine Predictions, are, I think, the best and most approved Expositions of those Prophecies when they are fulfilled, and the best measure which can be taken for the understanding of them.

Two things then would be enquired into touching the Events we speak of.

1. What, and which they are which we may reasonably pitch upon for those Events.

2. How we may be assured from some Scriptures of the New Testament, that those Events of Providence which we shall pitch upon, are indeed of that sort and kind which the Prophecies we speak of point us to.

- I. For the first of these, we have very great reason to believe that those National Reformations from Paganism

and Judaism, and those National Re-
formations from Popery which have
been made in the world since the Chri-
stian Religion was first set on foot, and
which shall yet farther be made, are
those very *Events*, or the chiefest
part of them, which the Prophecies,
before specified, point us to. We
cannot say that any Reformation
of either kind has been National, un-
till it has been back'd by National Au-
thority. Its true, there have been
great multitudes of men during the
standing of the Roman Empire as Pagan,
that were recovered from Judaism and
Paganism to Christianity; and there
were many famous Churches of such:
But I think no one Nation, as such,
could be said to be joyned to the Lord
in all that time, tho' out of many
Kindreds, Tongues, and Nations, there
were many, very many both men and
women that were. But Nations then
became Nationally the Lords when
the Christians in them were owned as
such, and required to behave themselves
as such by the Supreme Authority and
ruling

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ruling powers of those Nations; that there might possibly be many in those Nations at the same time, which yet did not so much as pretend themselves to be Christians.

2. But let us inquire in the second place what assurance we have from any of the holy Writings of the New Testament, that those National Re-formations from Paganism and Popery that have been made in New Testament times, and which shall further be made in other Nations; are those Events of Providence which the Prophecies, touching National conversions, point at. And to this end let us observe,

First, That at what time the Supreme Power of the Roman Empire fell into Christian hands, and was im-ployed for the destruction and rooting out Pagan Idolatry, and for the setting up and establishing the Publick Worship of Almighty God and his Son Jesus Christ, throughout its Domi-nions: Then it was that this King-dom or Dominion became Gods Kingdom

Kingdom in Scripture account. For to this great turn of Affairs in the judgment of the most approved Interpreters of the *Revelations* does that joyful acclamations refer which we have set down in Chap. 12. 10. *Now is come Salvation, and Strength, and the Kingdom of our God; and the Power of his Christ,* At which time also, the great Dragon, called the Devil and Satan, was cast out, and his Angels with him, ver. 9. that is, those Rulers supreme and subordinate, who had till then done his work in promoting the Interest of the Kingdom of darkness by supporting Idolatry, and persecuting Christians; as it was said, *The Devil shall cast some of you into prison,* Rev. 2. 10.

But was not Gods Kingdom come into the Empire till now that the Government was made Christian by the Emperour being a Christian? Were there not many great and famous Christian Churches within the Empire while the Government of it was Pagan in respect of Worship? Why, yes there

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there was. Why then was not the Kingdom of God and the Power of his Christ said to be come till the Government in the hands of *Constantine* the Emperour became Christian? Why should this Song, *New is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ*; be applied to this great turn of Affairs in the Empire, rather than to that when the Preaching of the Gospel was first set on foot in it, and many Christian Congregations created? There can no other reason hereof be given, I conceive, but that all the while the Government of the Empire, in reference to Religion, was engaged for the upholding of the Visible Kingdom of the Devil, so far, and in this respect it might be said to be his Kingdom, to be sure it could not be said to be Gods so far as it was imployed against him. But when the Government of it became Christian, and engaged it self in throwing down the Kingdom of darkness, the Worship of false Gods, and in setting up and establishing the
Publick

Publick Worship of the true God, and the Christian Religion; then and from that time in this Scripture account, that Kingdom or Empire became the Kingdom of God and of his Christ, tho many of the Inhabitants of it continued still for a time at least, Idolaters as to their profession and private practice.

So that when, and so long as the Government of the Empire in its constitution in reference to Religion continued idolatrous, so long the Empire it self was not owned for Gods Kingdom, tho there were many *Christian Churches* in it: but when once the Government of it became Christian, it was then owned for Gods Kingdom, tho many of the Inhabitants of it were no Christians. From whence it follows, & may naturally be inferred, that in Scripture Notion Kingdoms are said to be Gods Kingdoms upon the account of a National Reformation from Idolatry and false worship; when ever it is made by the publick Government and authority of such Nations.

But now after this Reformation
R from

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from Paganism by the Imperial Authority and Power, in process of time there came a *falling away* in the Empire from the purity of Christian Worship, unto a Worship of a mixt nature, made up partly of a Worship given to the true God, and partly of a Worship given unto Creatures which is due only unto God ; which was done by the prevailing of the *Papal* Apostacy. And the *ten Kings* mentioned *Rev. 17.* into whose hands the Empire became divided, *gave their power and strength unto the Beast* for the support of this impure Worship and Pagan-like Superstition.

But after this had been done and continued in for several hundreds of years, several of those Kingdoms and Principalities, which had before given their power and strength unto the Beast, fell off, and reassumed that power and strength, and then devoted it to the service of God in reforming their Dominions from Popery, and in restoring the Publick Worship of God throughout their Dominions without any Idolatrous mixture. Upon which great turn of Affairs,

fairs, those great voices in heaven followed, saying, *The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*, Rev. 11. 15. For this joyful acclamation is here brought in upon occasion of the Resurrection and Exaltation of the Witnesses in this Chapter spoken of, and of the fall of a tenth part of the City spiritually called *Sodom and Egypt*. By which we understand that the fall of part of the Papal Power and Jurisdiction, and the rise and exaltation of the Witnesses, were *contemporary*; and that this great alteration and change in several Nations, made those Nations which were but Kingdoms of *this world* before, to become the Kingdoms of *our Lord, and of his Christ*.

Now there are these two reasons to induce us to believe that this Resurrection of the Witnesses, and the fall of a tenth part of the City, refer unto the great Reformation from Popery, which was made many years since in several Kingdoms and Principalities in Christendom, and consequently that

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the acclamation afore said (the Kingdoms of this world, are become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ) refer unto the same time and thing.

1. Because we have no where so great, so notable, and remarkable an alteration as that Reformation made in Christendom, foretold and particularly pointed at in this Book of Prophecies, if it were not in this. And yet it seems incredible that so great and famous an alteration of Affairs in the Popish State, and in the condition of the Church as that Reformation made, should not in special be pointed at somewhere in this Book of Prophecies. This reason the Reverend Dr. *More* hath furnished me with in his Appendage annexed to his Exposition of *Daniels Prophecies*, p. 291. With whose Exposition, of what I here alludge out of *Rev. 11*. I am abundantly satisfied as I find it in the fore said Appendage, and in his Book entituled, *The Revelation of St. John unveiled.*

2. The

2. The matters which fell out and weretransacted in and by that Reformation, did exactly answer to that which was foretold by that Propheſie touching the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes, and the fall of the Popiſh power and intereſt in a conſiderable part of the Popes Jurisdiction. For then there was a *Political* Reſurrection of that ſort of men who had been *Politically* ſlain, and a long time dead; for crying down Popery. And this was done when ſuch were put into publick imployment in all Reformed Nations. And at the ſame time on the other hand, there was a *Political* ſlaughter of *thouſands of men*, when all thoſe that had been in Office and holy Orders in their Church, were put down in all thoſe Nations that then became reformed. And this reaſon methinks ſhould convince any unprejudiced man, that our firſt happy National Reformation from Popery in ſeveral Nations, was the fulfilling of that Propheſie touching the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes we ſpeak of.

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And if it were, then I cannot see how any can deny but, that those voices in heaven which presently followed thereupon, did declare that those Nations which while Popish, were but Kingdoms of this World, yet by their National reformation from Popery they became the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.

But if the Propheſie concerning the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes ſhould refer unto another time and turn, and not to that of the firſt National Reformation from Popery, yet that ſaying, *The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Chriſt,* upon the occaſion there foregoing, will no leſs ſerve to prove that Nations by their National Reformation from Popery, became the Kingdoms of God, than it would in caſe that Propheſie had referred unto the firſt National Reformation from Popery. For the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes, the Earthquake, the fall of a tenth part of the City, and *Political* ſlaughter of *ſeven thouſand of names of men,* muſt

must needs import a great alteration of Affairs and National Reformation, wheresoever and whensoever they fall out, be it sooner or later; because upon it we see some of those Nations which were but Kingdoms of the world before, do then become the Kingdoms of God. And if Nations of the world *indefinitely*, become the Kingdoms of God by being reformed from Popery or Paganism, so as to make the right Christian Doctrine and Worship, the Religion of those Nations by National Authority; then the same is true of *all Nations* which are so reformed at any time, and consequently of those which led the way, and have been first in such Reformation. And thus our proof appears every way pregnant.

To conclude this matter then; when we find that in all times and places in point of fact, that as fast as the Sovereign and Supreme Power in each Nation has fallen into Orthodox Christian hands, so fast those Nations have become reformed from Paganism

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or Popery by the Governing Power of those Nations: And when we find again that by such Reformations, those Nations have become Gods Kingdoms as contradistinguished from the Kingdoms of this world; great reason we have to believe these to be the very and true Events, and the fulfilling of such ancient Predictions of the Prophets, as those which foretold that many Nations should be joyned to the Lord, and be his People.

It is true, it was a great while after Christianity began, before it became National by National Authority, as it was long after *Abraham* and his Posterity became the People of God by the Covenant of Circumcision, before they and their Religion became National: And as the one was in bondage four hundred years under the *Egyptian* Tyranny, so were the Christians three hundred years under the Tyranny of the Pagan *Roman* Emperours, before they and their Religion became National by National Authority. But as the Christian Religion
and

and Worship as reformed, has since the Reformation been carried on principally in a National way, so I doubt not but that it will be carried on farther, and more Nations come to be reformed from Popery, Infidelity, and Paganism, until at last that ancient Prophecie of the Angel by *Daniel* comes to be fulfilled; which tells us, *That the Kingdom, and Dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the Saints of the most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom; and all Dominions (or Rulers as it is in the Margin) shall serve and obey him, Dan. 7. 27.* And that also in *Psal. 72, 11. All Kings shall fall down before him; all Nations shall serve him.*

And now from what hath been represented to us in the foresaid Prophecie of *St. John, Rev. 11.* we may briefly observe these two or three things.

1. That notwithstanding any lesser defects in Doctrine, Worship, or Government Ecclesiastical, in any of the National

National Reformation from Popery which have been made, yet after and because such Reformation has been made, those Nations are in Scripture account esteemed the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, as opposed to the Kingdoms of this world. Which seems to me to fall somewhat hard upon such as *separate* from the publick Worship of God established in such Nations by National Authority, in a way of National Reformation; and on those more especially who separate from that Worship for that very reason, because enjoined by National Authority. It likewise falls hard upon them also who disesteem, or less esteem a *National Ministry*, because it is National, or made such according to a National establishment. These seem to be of one mind, and Almighty God of another, when he esteems Nations to be joyned to him, and to be his People by that, for which they separate.

Their pretence that in the Apostles times, and for three hundred years after,

after, the Affairs of the Church were carried on only in a free Congregational way in greater or lesser voluntary Associations, and therefore they ought to be so now, seems very inconsiderable. Because what was done in that kind then, was done by way of necessity, because they had not opportunity of a better. Not but that they long'd for, and pray'd for such Kings as would use their Authority and Power for the propagation and furtherance of the Christian Religion, as well as for the defence of it, and the Professors of it. And they esteemed it no small favour from God, when at last they obtained it in *Constantine*, a Christian *Cesar*, who used that Power of his for the establishing the Christian Religion and Worship of the only true God, and for the ordering and regulating many things relating to the more commodious and orderly carrying on the ministration of the Gospel and the Worship of God. And therefore the people of God then existent in the Empire, are brought

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brought in by the Spirit of Propheſie, expreſſing themſelves thus upon that occaſion: *Now is come ſalvation, and ſtrength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt,* as I ſhew'd before, *Rev. 12. 10.*

2. It may be juſtly queſtioned, whether it be worth the while for men to diſpute againſt the being of a National Church in New Teſtament times, conſidering that in the New Teſtament, Nations reformed from Paganism and Popery, are ſtilled Gods Kingdoms: And conſidering likewise, that the Scripture ſtiles the ſame people, and in the ſame reſpect, ſometimes the *Kingdom* of God, and ſometimes his *Church*. And therefore it ſhould ſeem no more improper to call a Chriſtian Nation a Church of God, than it is to call it a Kingdom of God, which yet, the Scripture ſtiles ſo.

3. It may be obſerved yet farther, That the Kingdoms or Nations which have been reformed from Popery, were before ſuch reformation was made,

made, *but Kingdoms of this world*, notwithstanding much of what pertains to the Christian Religion, was then owned and professed in them. The Spirit of God by whom the book of *Revelations* was indited, we see stiles them so in their *unreformed* state: *The Kingdoms of this world are become, &c.* Yet they then in their unreformed state, Worshipped the true God, and his Son Christ Jesus: They owned the holy Scriptures for the Word of God, and used the same Creeds which the Reformed Churches themselves use; and yet we see they are in that state stiled by the Spirit of God, *but Kingdoms of this world*, when as under their reformed state, they are said to be the Kingdoms of God and of his Christ.

Like as Almighty God for the like reason esteemed the Nation of the Jews, who had been his own Church and People; but as *Ethiopians unto him*; Amos 9. 7. and told them by another Prophet, *Ye are not my people, and I will not be your God*, Hos. 1. 10.

For

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For tho they had his Ordinances among them, and boasted of their Temple-Worship, crying, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these*; yet at the same time they burnt Incense unto Baal, and walked after other Gods, Jer. 7. they divided their Worship between the true God and Baal, and did swear by the Lord and by Malcham, Zeph. 1. 5. And upon this account it was that God said of them by his Prophet, *they are unto me as a speckled bird*, of a Religion of several colours, Jer. 12. 9. For this spiritual Whoredom especially it was, that Almighty God who had once espoused that people to himself, gave them a Bill of Divorce at last, brake up house, turned them out of doors, and sent them out of his Land, untill they should repent and reform. And if we compare these things with the spiritual whoredom wherewith Mystical Babylon is charged, and for which, with other heinous crimes, she is threatened in this Book of Revelations, it will
not

not be at all hard to conceive why Nations while Popish, are stiled and esteemed but Kingdoms of this world.

And this, if there were no other, is argument enough to prevail with all such as would not be disowned by God; to be none, or to become none of their Communion, who are thus disowned by him.

And thus we have seen how both from the light and law of Nature, the reason of the thing, and from divine Revelation also, the great expediency at least of the publick exercise of Gods Worship in the way of National establishment, is warranted, and approved of.

This then may be a caution to men, who live in any such reformed Nation as we have discoursed of, and as ours is, to take heed of acting in matters Ecclesiastical, or pertaining to Church Communion, as if they lived in a Popish or Pagan Nation, by disowning and by separating from the National way of Worship, lest thereby they
discoun-

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discountenance and disparage what God approves of, and disown that for which God owns such a Nation for his Kingdom. It is true, the Primitive Christians, who lived in, Pagan Countries, and those since which have lived in Popish, have been necessitated in duty to be separate in their Christian Communion from their National Worship, as much as they were obliged not to be Idolaters. But there is a great difference between false Worship, and defects in that which is true. The best Church Constitution, and the best Church Administration, which have men not divinely inspired for the ordering of them, are liable to humane defects. And if humane defects even in Gods Worship, were not to be endured for the sake of Communion in the Worship itself, there could no such thing as Church Communion be enjoyed among Christians, because we cannot say there is any in this imperfect state in which we are, without defects.

But

But then the question will be what defects are to be indured in Gods Worship, rather than Communion in it should be forsaken? and what are intolerable, and for the sake of which Communion in the Worship is to be declined?

And here it seems to me impossible warrantably to determine any defects intolerable which do not alter the nature of the Worship, and make it become false Worship; that do not destroy or defeat the ends for which true Worship serves. Who is he that will undertake to determine for what defects; which are consistent with Gods true Worship, Communion in that Worship is to be declined?

But then the next question will be, How we shall know what Worship is true, and what is false? And so what Worship it is that Communion in it is to be declined, and what not?

Now that's false Worship which is given to a wrong Object, or to that which is not God. And that again is

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alse Worship, tho given to God the right Object, when that which is not true matter of Worship, is given to him as matter of Worship.

But how shall we know when Worship is false in respect of the matter? Worship is then false in respect of the matter, when that is performed to God as required by him, which is not so. For so we are taught, *Mat. 15. 9. In vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of men.* That's a vain or false Worship, when humane Ordinances are imposed, and observed *as* the Commands of God; and this is the *adding to his Word* also, which is forbidden, *Deut. 4. 2.*

But then there is a great difference between these and the use of things in or about Gods Worship which are not of the Essence of it, nor used under the Notion of being commanded by God, but professedly used as things indifferent in their own nature, and only as matters of Humane Prudence; and for this reason cannot justly be charged to be false Worship.

There

There is a great difference likewise between the Essence of Worship, and the Accidents of it, between the matter and substance of it, and the circumstances of external administration. There is not the liberty of varying in the one as there is in the other. As for instance, we are not left at like liberty in the choice of the Object, and matter of Prayer and Thanksgiving, as we are in the external manner of address, nor limited by expressness of Rule in the one, as we are in the other. We are expressly commanded to pray to God in the name of Christ, and have express direction for all the substantial parts or matter of Prayer, as Confession, Supplication, Petition, Thanksgiving, and Intercession; but whether in a set Form, or without, whether with the use of a Book, or without, whether in one or more Prayers at a time, or whether kneeling or standing, is not determined; but in these we are left at liberty to use or chuse as Circumstances shall direct or require. And

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the like may be said concerning other parts of Gods Worship, Baptism; and the Lords Supper. The Ordinances themselves are particularly commanded, but so are not several Circumstances relating to the external administration of them, but are left to the Prudence of Church Guides, and Governours under general Rules. And altho one way of external administration of Worship may be better than another, and that may be chosen as best by such as have power of chusing, which yet is not best in it self; yet so long as it does not alter the nature of the Worship it self, nor defeat the ends and uses to which an external administration serves, it can by no means be duly esteemed to be false Worship. The worst that can be said of such an administration of Worship which is not simply unlawful in it self, but only inferiour in goodness unto the best, is only this, That it is inexpedient, when a better might have been had, if they had thought so by whom the choice was made.

Now

Now suppose then, that when the happy Work of National Reformation from Popery was laid and begun by the great Instruments of it, (whose memory is blessed, and name precious to good men.) Suppose, I say, they may possibly have been mistaken in the betterness of some things in the external manner and form of administration of Publick Worship; yet so long as such things do not amount unto any false Worship, but are only Imperfections in the true, the question will be, Whether it be prudent and becoming good men in this case to seek amendment of those supposed defects, in any other way than in the same National course of proceeding by which the Reformation was first wrought. And the reason is,

1. Because God hath owned this way of Reformation by declaring Nations upon account of it to be his Kingdoms, which we cannot say he hath done upon account of any Reformation wrought in them any other way without this.

2. Because when such a Reformation is attempted in a Nation already reformed, in opposition to the Reformation established by Law, it cannot reasonably be expected, but that more hurt will be done thereby, than good obtained, as we have found by sad experience in this Nation. For by this means a Nation comes to be divided against it self, Party against Party, to the engendering *disaffection, envying, and strife*, and where these are, there is (as St. James hath told us) *confusion, and every evil work*. And by this means there is a very sensible decay and loss of that wherein the very life and spirit of Religion in men lies. But the Reformation in the external part of Worship, which is sought after in this extraordinary way, is in things but of such a nature, as wherein the life and spirit of Religion in men is little concerned one way or other, either as to loss or gain. And therefore to chuse to seek this sort of Reformation in such a way, as by which the loss was likely to be
far

far greater than the gain, and has since proved to be so, is a thing doubtless which cannot become the wisdom of good men.

Now that the Reformation in the external part of Worship which is pursued in the extraordinary and undue way we speak of, is in things but of such a nature as wherein the spirit and life of Religion in men is little concerned one way or other, as to loss or gain, appears by this, *viz.* Because there have been, and are very many, who have lived under the use of that external Mode of Worship without any such Reformation of it as is contended for, in whom the spirit and life of Religion has been found as much (as may well be presumed) as in any other who have used any other Mode of Worship different from it. Not that I am against mens seeking that which they apprehend to be best in these matters, provided it be in the National way, and in such a manner as that more hurt be not done by the way and manner of

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seeking it, than good can be acquired in their way of obtaining it by separation.

3. It is becoming the wisdom of good men to seek the amendment they desire, by complying as far as they can with what is already established; because by so doing, and by seasonable and humble application to the *Legislative* Powers of the Nation, they may in all reason sooner obtain what is reasonable and meet to be granted, than by separating from it, and setting up another way in opposition to it. And the reason is, because the one is apt to beget a good opinion of them, and of the innocency and goodness of their intention in what they desire and seek: Whereas the other tends to exasperate and provoke, and to beget an ill opinion of them, and a jealousy of their designs, in the minds of those from whom they expect ease and relief in what is matter of grievance to them: And that which does that, is no good way of obtaining from them. *Solomon's* wise advice is,

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and National Constitutions. 265

*If the Spirit of the Ruler rise up
against thee, leave not thy place ;
for yielding pacifieth great offences.
Ecclef. 10.4.*

QUERY XIII.

*W*Herein may Catholick Church Communion consist? And how, and by what means is it best preserved?

To clear our way in this Inquiry it will be convenient to take notice of the difference that is between the *Union* of the Catholick Church, and the *Communion* of it. The *Union* of the Catholick Church consists in the same *Relation* which all the Members of that one Body bear to Christ the Head of it, and to one another as fellow-members: But the *Communion* of this spiritual Corporation consists in a mutual performance of those Christian Duties and Offices to which they are engaged by virtue of that relation. By that Relation in which
their

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their Union consists they come to have a greater interest in one another than they had before their incorporation into that body ; and by it they come under new duties to one another to which they were not obliged before ; But their Communion consists much in a mutual discharge of those duties towards one another, and in an improvement of that interest for the benefit of one another, and the good of the whole by their mutual intercourse in spiritual affairs. The Union of the whole, which is made by one Baptism, or the Baptismal Covenant, respects the *being* of the Church : But Catholick Communion respects its *well-being* by its increase in wisdom, goodness, and comfort.

There is indeed a Catholick Church *Unity* by Communion as well as there is another which comes by Relation ; but this Unity of Communion flows from that which is made by a Relation common to the whole.

Having

Having thus briefly considered how Catholick Communion differs from Catholick Union, I shall now proceed to shew a little more particularly wherein or in what Catholick Communion doth consist. And we may best know what it is, and wherein it doth consist by the account we have of it as practised in the Catholick Church when it first became Christian. And this account we have in these words, *Acts 2.42. And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* By which description we see it consisted in their consent and agreement in three things, *Faith, Worship, Fellowship.*

1. In their agreeing in the same Faith; they continued stedfastly in the Apostles *Doctrine*; that is, in the belief of it, in attendance to it, and practice of it. From the same faith, being common to all Christians, it is called, the *common faith*, *Tit.1.4.* the *one faith*, *Eph.4.5.* and their agreement in it, is stiled, *Unity in the faith*, *Eph. 4.13.* 2. In

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2. In their agreement in the same Worship; *breaking of bread and prayers.* This Catholick Church in its beginning is said to have continued *with one accord* in Prayer and Supplication, *Acts* 1. 14. And on the day of *Pentecost* they were all with *one accord* in *one place*, when the Holy Ghost was poured out upon them. And when their number so increased that they could not all perform this Publick Worship together in one place, but in several distinct Assemblies, called particular Churches, yet their *agreement* in the same Worship, made their Communion in it but *one Communion*, tho performed in several Assemblies.

For altho these Assemblies be never so far distant from one another, yet so long as they all agree in the same Worship, the distance of place can no more hinder their Communion from being *one*, than their being baptized in several distant places, can hinder the Relation to one another contracted thereby, from being *one*, when it is
common

common to all the Members. We account all those to be of the Communion of the Church of *Rome* at the same time, and in the same acts in which they hold their Local Communion in several distant Nations, so long as they all agree in the same corrupt Worship. And there is the same reason for the Unity of the Communion in Worship of all Orthodox Assemblies in all Nations. So that I take this for an unquestionable truth, That it is mens agreement in the same Principles of Communion, be they good or bad, that makes their Communion but one, tho the particular acts of it are performed by them in many thousand distant places.

And now it is by the Union of Relation by the Baptismal Covenant, and the Unity of Communion by agreement in the Principles of the Worship wherein they have Communion, that all Orthodox Christians make one great House or Temple of God in the world, in which he is openly worshipped, and publickly acknowledged

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knowledged to be what he is, the one only true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in opposition to all false Gods, *Ephes. 2. 21. In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord.* This is that house which is called *Christ's own house*, *Heb. 3. 6.* and that *House of God* over which *Christ* is said to be *High Priest*, *Heb. 10. 21.* And particular Churches in reference to this one house, are but as several Apartments in it, which all together make up the great house of God.

And in this house of his God dwells, and therein manifesteth himself to his People after a more special manner than he does to the world; *2 Cor. 6. 16. Ye are the Temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.* Here Almighty God meets with them, and communicates with them, and receives their addresses; and here he entertains them with the *fatness of his house*, the Ordinances of the Gospel, and the
benign

benign influences and comfortable presence of his Spirit in the use of them. In this way the whole Church in their several Assemblies have Communion with their Head Christ Jesus, and one with another, by partaking in common of the spiritual benefits communicated by the Lord, and in assisting in common in the Worship, Adoration, and Thanksgiving which the Church renders him for the glory and transcendent perfections of his nature and being, and returns him for all the blessings and benefits they receive from him.

And the more all Christians are agreed in their worshipping of God, and in their Communion with him, the more they honour him, and the more they please him, and make themselves the more capable of receiving all good things from him in the greater abundance. If the agreement but of two of them touching any thing they shall ask, hath his promise of granting it, (*Mat. 18. 19.*) what might not be expected from him if the

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the whole Church were of one heart
and one soul, as they were at the
first in matters of their Commu-
nion.

3. Catholick Communion consti-
steth also in the mutual assistances
which Christians give to, and receive
one from another, couched in that
one word *Fellowship* in the description
of Catholick Communion, *Acts 2.42.*
*And they continued stedfastly in the Apo-
stles Doctrine, and Fellowship, &c.* The
same word which in our Version is
here translated *Fellowship*, is by the
Dutch in their Version translated *Com-
munion*. And according to *Dr. Ham-
mond* it signifies both to *communicate*,
and to *participate*, to *distribute*, and to
receive.

So that according to the nature of
Christian Communion, every Mem-
ber of the whole Church is or ought
to be useful and serviceable to the
whole Community of Christians in
general, and to every Christian in
particular, so far as they can, in the
place and rank in which the Provi-
dence

dence of God both for them. The which if duly observed by all as it ought to be, the same persons that thus communicate and contribute assistance to others, would be receiving back again from the whole, and from every Member in particular, the like succour service and assistance as opportunity serves, as they themselves had contributed to them: As a Christian is to serve every fellow-Christian, so according to the same Law every one is to serve him. This is that the Apostle means when he says, *By love serve one another.* Gal. 5. 13. And this giving and receiving assistance, the same Apostle calls *communicating with him*, Phil. 4. 15.

If this Catholick Communion were but duly maintained among all Christians, how like a heaven upon earth would the Catholick Church be? And how happy would they be even now for the present that are of it? And how would the Inhabitants of the World that are not of it, then flow into it? And yet for Christians thus

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to exchange Offices of love with one another, is nothing more than what we are all obliged to by the Royal Law of Love; *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* For if I am hereby bound to love every Neighbour as my self, so is every Neighbour obliged by it to love me as they love themselves. And how delightful a commerce would this be, if the Christian Church were but so happy as to hit on it!

The particular duties and offices of love in which this part of Christian Communion does consist, are such as these; the instructing and exhorting one another, the watching over and admonishing one another, the strengthening the feeble minded, the visiting and comforting the afflicted, the relieving one anothers wants, the bearing on anothers burdens, the having the same care one for another, and the like. Together with these we may reckon the yielding and allowing to every one the liberty of sharing in the common privilege of enjoying
Com-

Communion in Gospel-Ordinances and Worship, so long as they have not made themselves incapable of it by drawing on themselves deservedly the Censures of the Church, nor are otherwise naturally incapable of the end and use for which those Ordinances, or any of them were ordained, as little Children seem to be in reference to the Lords Supper.

THUS much briefly touching the nature of Catholick Communion: Come we now to enquire how, and by what means it may best be preserved. There are two Bonds which the Scripture mentions, by which Christians are bound and knit together in one Communion, the bond of *Charity*, and the bond of *Peace*.

1, The bond of Charity: *Above all these things put on Charity which is the bond of perfectness, Col. 3.14.* Charity is a bond which knits and unites mens

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hearts together, and makes them *one in affection*, (*knot together in love*, as it is exprest *Col. 2. 2.*) and while they be so, it can hardly be but that they will be *one in Communion*. This was that which made the Catholick Church in its beginning to be *all of one heart and one soul*, as it is said the multitude of them that believed were, *Acts 4. 32.* And that was the reason doubtless why they continued stedfastly in their Communion in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayer.

Charity we see is called the bond of perfectness: for the Church is in a kind of perfect state in her Communion, so long as the Parts and Members of it are knit together in one Communion by love; *made perfect in one*, as our Saviour expresth it, *Joh. 17. 23.* And the Union in Communion which is made by love, is Union in its perfection, nothing unites Christians so entirely and firmly as love does. If Christians love one another *in the truth,*

truth, and for the truth sake which dwelleth in them, as St. John speaks, this Love and Union by Love will last; there will be no failure in the oneness of Communion, until there be first a failure in love.

Charity must needs unite and knit Christians together in one Communion, because it is the Principle from which the particular acts of Christian Fellowship, fore-mentioned, do spring: a great part of the acts of Christian Communion are nothing else but offices of brotherly love, and by these Christians take fast hold one of another, Charity in its own nature is communicative of the good it has, and the good it can do, and by that it does attract and draw others to a nearer conjunction with those in whom it dwells. Charity is the *Arms* of the Christians *inner* man by which they imbrave one another, though absent.

Love is of a winning nature, it gains upon others that stand at a distance: If a Principle of love be in the heart,

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it will season a mans speech, and enable him to *speake the truth in love*, according to *St. Pauls* direction. And the truth spoken in love will sooner reconcile, than the strongest Arguments when mixt with bitterness of Spirit. A tongue of love is *Solomons* tongue of health, it will heal wounds, when another tongue does but make them. And therefore with great reason did *St. Paul* call upon the Church of *Corinth* to do all their things with Charity, and spent a whole Chapter upon them to persuade them to it, as an effectual means to cure the divisions into which they were unhappily fallen.

Again, *Charity covereth a multitude of sins*, (1 Pet. 4. 8.) and by that means among other it keeps Christians from flying asunder, and dividing in their Communion, which many times takes its first rise from very small matters, when they meet with an evil mind that will aggravate and make the worst of things, and seek out matter to make the breach wider. But

Charity

Charity is not apt to spy faults, or to pick quarrels, nor to aggravate and make the worst of things, nor to harbour jealousies or evil surmises, out of which breaches are wont to grow: but it will over-look mens weaknesses, mistakes, and inadvertencies, as believing they do not proceed from an evil mind. And if any thing be amiss, love will take notice of all the extenuating circumstances in the case much rather than those which tend to aggravate a matter. *Charity thinketh not evil, is not easily provoked, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; and by these means charitable men have hold of others, and keep them from flying out, unless of very bad minds and ill tempers.*

The truth is, Charity is that to Catholick Communion, which the Soul is to the natural body, the life and spirit of it that preserves it in a healthful condition; but so far as Charity is wanting in Communion, so far that Communion is sickly.

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and languishing, and void of its true
spirit and life.

2. The other Bond by which Christians are bound up together in one Catholick Communion, is the *bond of peace*, Ephes. 4. 3: *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* So that we see Peace is the bond by which the Unity of the Spirit is kept. Now this *Unity of the Spirit* is that oneness of mind and oneness of practice which holy men inspired by the Spirit have taught all Christians to observe, in reference to *Faith, Worship, and Love*: that is, that they should be all of one and the same Faith, use the same Worship, and have the same love to one another; which are the same things in which the Communion of the Catholick Church from the beginning of it did consist, as I have already shewed. When St. Paul beseecheth the Christians in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that they would *all speak the same thing, and that there might be no divisions among them, but that they*
would

would be perfectly joynd together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, he doth not say in reference to what, *1 Cor. 1. 10.* But it is to be supposed that they readily understood his Exhortation to refer to these great Articles of Christianity. The like we have in *Phil. 2. 1, 2.* save that love is there particularly instanced in: *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind,*

The Unity of the Spirit then is the Unity of Christians in those things in which they have Communion, or their Unity in Communion; and this is we see to be kept or preserved by the bond of peace. Now this peace consisteth chiefly in Christians avoiding differences among themselves as much as in them lies. But if differences do arise, then this peace consisteth in such gentleness, moderation, and calmness of behaviour in Christians one towards another,

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another, as by reason whereof their Christian Converse is not interrupted, nor their Communion disturbed, their differences notwithstanding. It is true indeed, in this imperfect state, it cannot be but that there will be difference of opinion among Christians about lesser things not essential to Communion, especially concerning such circumstantial matters as are left undetermined in Scripture, except only by general rule. - For considering that more Christians are weaker than those that are strong, and less spiritual both in point of knowledge, and in the graces of Humility, Meekness, and Charity, and more unmortified in self-will, and self-conceit, it cannot be otherwise but that there will be differences among Christians. But yet if the greater, the wiser and the better sort of Christians do not slight and despise those that differ from them through weakness of judgment, or prejudice of education, nor violently oppose them, but patiently bear with them, and wisely insinuate to them by degrees

degrees those things which may help them; and by condescension become all things to them for their good so far as innocently they can, peace may very well be preserved among them which otherwise differ in many things. Not but that offences will come when the best men have done the best they can to prevent it; for this will fall out so long as there are those among Christians whose Lusts and Passions are unmortified. But I am shewing how the Unity of the Spirit may be kept in the bond of peace among them that differ in mind and opinion about circumstantial matters, and that they may converse very lovingly together, where unmortified Lusts and Passions do not prevail, notwithstanding such difference. The wise and good carriage of good men towards those that differ, will have a great influence upon them, if not presently to reconcile them in opinion, yet to charm them into a peaceable demeanour, if they be not men of ill temper.

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God himself makes allowances unto men that differ conscientiously about lesser things, and not out of affectation, though they err in judgment, so long as their error proceeds not from a corrupt will or pride of mind, *Rom. 14.* and good men so far as they are partakers of a divine nature, will do so too. And such differences are very consistent with Catholick Communion in peace and love, So that it is not so much mens differing in opinion about circumstantial matters in Religion that breaks Peace, destroys Charity, and disturbs the Communion of the Church, but mens unruly Lusts and Passions of pride, envy, and ill will, which take the advantage thence to vent themselves against one another in irregular practices. *From whence come wars and brawlings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Jam. 4. 1.*

Tho Christians then may differ in opinion in some lesser things, yet so long as they agree in the substance of Faith

Faith and Worship; and so long as they manage themselves in their differences so as that peace is not broken by any irregular or troublesome behaviour, their Communion in Faith, Worship, and Fellowship, or mutual love, cannot suffer much by such differences. For Peace and Charity support each other, and propagate each other. And the Apostle does very well therefore couple them together in his Exhortation, *Col. 3. 14, 15. Above all these things put on Charity, which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which ye are called in one body.* The Peace here meant, to which Christians are called by being united in one body, is peaceable living one with another.

3. Besides the bond of Charity, and the bond of Peace, there is a third thing very necessary to the Unity and peaceable Communion in the Church, and that is *prudent and moderate Government.* The peace and purity of the Church are two great ends of the Govern-

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Government in it; both which conduce very much to the comfortable Communion of the Church, and to the Christians Unanimity in it. In reference to which, *Moderation*, is very necessary in respect of the external manner and circumstances of Worship; as namely, that the terms of Communion therein be made as easie as will well consist with publick edification and comely order. For when they are so, men will have no tolerable pretence upon account of conscience to refuse Communion with the Church therein. But otherwise some out of scruple of Conscience and others from a worse Principle, will be apt to take occasion to disturb the peace of the Church with disputes, and by deserting the Communion of it.

And then moderation and prudence are necessary to the same end in the exercise of Discipline in the Church, by making a difference in correcting open and notorious scandals, and lesser disorders. For else if both be punished

punished alike when they are not alike criminal; or if lesser disorders shall be strictly looked after, and severely punished, and greater connived at, it will tend to lessen the Government in mens reverence and esteem; and so weaken the sense of the Churches peace, and render Communion with her less desirable by such as will take themselves to be unequally dealt with by her.

2. But as good Government in the Church is necessary to its Peace, and to Unity in its Communion, so is obedience to such Government, without which Government loseth its end.

But when the Government and exercise of it is equal and as easie as will consist with the due ends of it, then if yet for all that men will be troublesome and disobedient under it, they will be left without excuse in the eyes of sober men, if fitting course be taken to restrain them from disturbing the peace of the Church; for otherwise if this be not granted, Government in the Church would signifie little.

THUS much concerning our Inquiry touching the nature of Catholick Communion, and the means of preserving it. But before I proceed to an Inquiry into the nature of Schisma. I think it not amiss to enquire for what reason the Unity of Catholick Communion is necessary, and why we should endeavour that as much as may be it should be kept entire, and all of a piece, and without Fracture. And the only reason which I shall insist on is this; because its being such, and so kept and maintained, tends greatly to the growth and increase of the Church both in respect of the number of its Members, and bigness of its Body, and also in respect of its healthful state, and its growing up to a greater stature in all virtue and goodness.

1. It tends to the increase of the body of Christians in the number of its Members. For next to the miraculous

culous operations of the Holy Ghost in the Apostles and Primitive Believers, the peaceable and charitable demeanour among Christians, and good agreement among themselves if it were generally found in them, would attract and draw men to the liking and love of the Religion which they profess, for the sake of the lovely effects it produceth in them. Men can hardly think otherwise than well of that Religion by which they find men are made more peaceable and loving, and more ready to all good office; to one another, and to all men than others are, or than they themselves were before they engaged heartily and seriously in it.

And that the concord and good agreement of all Christians in one Catholick Communion has so happy a tendency, as I have said, to draw others to the belief & love of that same Religion, appears by the reason why, and for which our blessed Saviour so earnestly desired and prayed for the Union and Agreement of all Christians

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in the things their Religion taught them, to wit, because the world would thereby be brought to believe that he the Author of it, had been sent of God, *Joh. 17. 20, 21.* *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* And its most apparent that the contrary to this has had its contrary effect. For where have any such numerous additions to the Catholick Church been found from among the Pagan world, since the great divisions which have risen and been kept on foot in the Christian world, as those which were made for some hundreds of years together in the Primitive times while Catholick Communion was preserved in the Church without any considerable interruption? Nay, have not the unreasonable divisions and fierce contentions which have broken out in the Reformed Churches since the Reformation,

mation, and in our own nation especially, been a temptation to many to turn Atheists or Scepticks?

The holy Scriptures in many places seem to foretel a more general flowing of the Nations of the world into the Church, than ever yet has been accomplished: But we cannot reasonably expect this should be brought to pass by means of the Christian Churches in being, until by humility, peaceableness, and charity, and good agreement among themselves, and other virtues, they make a better representation of the excellency of the Religion which they profess, than they do at this day. When God Almighty *turns to the people a pure Language*, then it may be expected they will *call upon him, and serve him with one consent*; as the Prophet speaks, *Zeph. 3. 9*, Not while they treat one another with *impure* and corrupt Language which smels of wrath and disdain, of envy, spight, and contempt; Not while by words they do all they can to disgrace one another, but by *speaking*.

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the truth in love, and with meekness of
wisdom.

2. The good agreement of Christians in one Catholick Communion, tends greatly to the increase of the Church in respect of its spiritual healthful state, and its growing up to a greater stature in all virtue and goodness. For where peace and good agreement is in the several offices of Christian Brotherhood, there love is, which is the bond of perfectness which holds them fast together. And love is a *radical* grace, out of which other graces grow, in so much that love is made the Summary of all Christian duties towards one another: *Love* is said to *be the fulfilling of the Law*, Rom. 13. 8.10. *Charity edifieth*, saith St. Paul, 1 Cor. 8.1. It tends to edifie and build up the subject in which it dwels, and to make him more like God who is love; and it tends to edifie the object on which it is set, and on which it exerciseth it self; it tends to build up both the one and the other in grace and goodness.

And

And there is this further reason why a peaceable agreement in one Catholick Communion tends to increase the Church in her spiritual riches, *viz.* because the holy Spirit of God delights to dwell where peace and love dwell, and there to dispence and communicate his treasures by which the souls of men are enriched; but without his supplies, influences, and operations, there is no thriving in grace and real goodness. *He that dwels in love, God dwels in him,* 1 Joh. 4.16. And where God takes up his special residence, he will adorn those living Temples with plenty of spiritual ornaments, and those shall be sure to be made partakers of his best sort of gifts, such as the world cannot receive. *Be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you,* saith St. Paul, 2 Cor. 13. 11. While the Catholick Church is of one mind in the great things of Christian Religion, and being so, do live in peace, and not unpeaceably contend, fall out and divide about lesser things,

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such as for which God perhaps doth neither esteem or disesteem men, he who is the God of love and peace will be with them to bless them with his presence, with spiritual blessings especially. And as the presence of the soul in the body enlivens it with natural life, by virtue whereof the several Members perform their several functions proper to each of them respectively, even so the presence of the holy Spirit in the body of Christ the Church does animate it with spiritual life, and does so influence and actuate the several Members of it, as that by virtue thereof they all perform their several Christian offices proper to each for the common good of the whole.

But then this vital power of acting spiritually, is conveyed by the Spirit to each of the Members *as they are in Union and communion with the whole*, and so as one Member is made a Channel of this conveyance to another, and each enabled to contribute its part to the common good of the whole.

whole. Thus Col. 2. 19. where St. Paul, mentioning the Head of the Church, saith, *from which all the body by joynts and bonds having nourishment ministred and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.* This spiritual nourishment of the body, flows from Christ the Head we see, as having obtained it by his Mediation; but then it is the great Office-work of the holy Spirit to apply the benefits obtained by Christ, to the several members of his body by working and increasing grace and comfort in them. *He shall glorifie me, for he shall receive of mine; and shew it unto you,* saith our Saviour, speaking of the Holy Ghost, Joh. 16. 14. And this conveyance of nourishment from the Head to the Members by the Holy Spirit, is made by the union of the parts as knit together by joynts and bands, by which Union one member is made a Channel of conveyance of nourishment to another: and in this way the whole body increaseth with the increase of God. This being so, a disunion of the parts

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or members must needs obstruct this spiritual nourishment, and hinder the growth of the body. To the same effect is that parallel place, *Ephes. 4. 15, 16. Speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joynt supplyeth, according to the effectual working of the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of it self in love.* This increase of the body to the edifying it self in love, is made we see both by the parts of the body being joyned together, and also by that which every joynt supplyeth being so compacted.

Thus we see how the increase of the Church in spiritual strength depends upon Gods special presence and assistance, and how the enjoyment of that presence depends upon the peaceable agreement and mutual love of the parts of which the Church doth consist. And if so, then unpeaceableness, discord and strife, contention

rention and dividing into Parties in the Church, must necessarily tend to deprive her of that special presence and divine assistance of the holy Spirit, without which Christians cannot thrive and increase in true goodness, and for want of which they will rather decline and go backward. Tho the God of peace and of love will be with his People while they are so of one mind in the Essentials of Christianity, as upon that account to live in peace and Christian Communion one with another, notwithstanding their differing in some lesser things, which will always be found in the best estate of the Church which can be expected here on earth; yet there is no reason to expect he will be so with them when they do not so live in peace, tho they should otherwise be of one mind in the fundamental Doctrines of Christianity, and all the substantial parts of Worship.

The holy Spirit may indeed dispense gifts of Knowledge, and Utterance, and the like, which are
common

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common to bad men as well as good; such as these he may bestow upon Christians even while they are in disorder and unpeaceable division: But as for those *fruits of the Spirit* which constitute men truly good, such as *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and meekness*, (Gal. 5. 22.) the having of these and men's being of an unpeaceable temper, and in a state of discord and division, are I fear inconsistent; for these are contrary one to another. The *St. Paul* acknowledged those of the Church of *Corinth* to be *enriched with all abundance and all knowledge*, Chap. 1, 5. yet in Chap. 3. 1. he tells them that he could not speak unto them as unto *spiritually* but as unto *carnal*, even as to *babes in Christ*; and for this reason, as it follows in ver. 3. because there was among them *envying, strife, and division*. *Ye are yet carnal*, saith he, *for where-as there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men*; that is, as other men which were no Christians. They might

might indeed know and believe, and talk otherwise and better than those that were out of the Church, but their walking and living was but as theirs, while envying, strife, and division was found with them. For these are of those *works of the flesh* of which St. Paul saith, *that those which do such things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God,* Gal. 5. 20, 21.

And if Christians would but examine and judge of themselves by these Scripture measures, it would make them on all hands, one side as well as another, to be as much afraid to do any thing to disturb the peace of the Church, or to be guilty of envying, strife, and division in it, as they would be to find themselves but in a carnal state, and of being shut out of the Kingdom of heaven.

And as for those who are guilty of these things in these sad times, wherein envying, strife and division do abound, it is hugely necessary that as they love their own souls, they would without delay repent, and get out of
such

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such a state, and not flatter and deceive themselves with an opinion of their good and safe condition upon account of their being otherwise Orthodox and Religious, so long as they indulge themselves in such a state.

QUERY XIV.

What is the nature of Schism?

From what hath been discoursed touching the nature of Catholick Communion, and the means of preserving it, we may be able to make a judgment of the nature of *Schism*, what it is, and who are guilty of it. For if Catholick Communion stands in the Unity of the Spirit, or Christians Unity in their Communion in the Doctrine of Faith in things necessary to Salvation, and in the substance of Worship; and in their fellowship or mutual love, as I have shew'd it does;

does; then their being *divided* in these, or any one of these, or in any lesser things, if the *Unity* of their Communion be thereby destroyed, that undoubtedly is *Schism*. When any thing which before was but one, comes to be divided, it ceaseth to be one any longer, unless there be a re-union; and thus it is in reference to Church Communion.

Altho Christians do agree in the Christian Faith, and in the substance of Worship also, yet if upon account of any lesser things they be so divided as that Christian Fellowship or Brotherly love be thereby destroyed, their *Unity* of Communion is thereby destroyed also. I do not say that all their Communion in those things wherein they are agreed is destroyed by uncharitable division, but this I say that the *Unity* of their Communion is thereby destroyed. For Brotherly love is an essential part of Cotholick Communion, so that if that be destroyed by any division, tho but about lesser matters, the *Unity* of the Communion
is

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is destroyed, and the guilt of Schism contracted, yea, and their Communion it self in Faith and Worship, wherein they are agreed, is greatly dammified also.

For their Communion in Faith and Worship is rendred unacceptable to God, and unprofitable to themselves for want of Communion in Brotherly love: *though I had all Faith and have not Charity, I am nothing.* And for Worship: *If thou bringest thy gift to the Altar, and rememberest that thy Brother-hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the Altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift;* Shewing how little God regardeth devotional Communion in Worship when void of true Charity.

The Schism we enquire after then, lies in *division in the Church*, as that is opposite to, and destructive of Christian Unity in Faith, or in Worship, or in Love, And all Church division tends more or less to the destruction of Christian Unity in these
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in whole or in part. That it lies in *division*, appears in that it receives its name from that; for the word *Schism* signifies *division* or a rent. And the Translators of our English Bible, when they have put the word *division* in the line reading, they have put *Schism* in the Margin, 1 Cor. 10. 10. and 11. 18. and when *Schism* in the line, *division* in the Margin, 1 Cor. 12. 25. and this they have done to explain the one by the other.

Since then Schism consists in Church division, it follows, that by how much the greater the division is at any time, by so much the greater is the Schism; and the less the one is, the less is the other also. We must therefore distinguish of Schism. There are several sorts or degrees of Division, and so of Schism, which are sometimes found among Christians.

I. A *different persuasion* in Christians touching some things *indifferent* in their own nature, some holding them unlawful, others lawful, some accounting them necessary, when others

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others are otherwise persuaded. This difference fell out between the believing Jews and the believing Gentiles touching some meats, the observation of days, and the use of Circumcision. And a difference much like to this, in some respects, has fallen out among some Christians in our days, and in our Nation. Now a *difference* of this nature, tho it be in some sort a *division*, yet it is capable of being so managed, as that the effects of sinful Schism shall scarcely at all follow upon it. As thus;

First, if those who are scrupulous, and yet under a mistake, shall be modest and humble in their dissenting, and desirous to be as little troublesome and offensive to their Brethren from whom they differ as possibly they can, and as tender of disturbing the peace of the Church as their case will permit, and ready to hear and impartially to consider any thing offered by their brethren to remove their scruples, and reconcile them in judgment.

Secondly,

Secondly, if they be not averſe to comply with their Brethren in all things *ſo far as they can*, and to hold Communion with them ſo far as they have *attained* and are agreed, according to the Apoſtles Exhortation in that caſe, when he ſays, *Nevertheless whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame thing*, Phil. 3. 16. For theſe words were uſed in reference to thoſe Chriſtians mentioned in the Verſe before, of whom he had ſaid, *If in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you*. And indeed this compliance is neceſſary in all like caſes to prevent Schiſm, upon a double account.

1. Otherwiſe, ſuch *do not what they can* to preſerve Peace, and prevent Schiſm, and ſo muſt be guilty of it if it follow for want of ſuch compliance. That to do thus is their undoubted duty, is clear from that of the Apoſtle, Rom. 12. 18. *If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*; how much more with fellow

Christians. If Christian compliance than be the way to live peaceably with Christian Brethren, then it follows, that if they do not comply *as much as in them lies*, and as far as they can when the preserving of peace requires it, they do not what they ought to do, and if Schism or a breach of peace follows, they must needs be necessary to it, and guilty of it.

2. Because if they do not comply so far as they can, , they give occasion of suspicion that their non-compliance in that wherein their differing from their Brethren professedly lies, proceeds not so much from scruple of conscience as from some worse Principle, such as, humour self will, a spirit of opposition and contradiction, or a personal prejudice against the men from whom they differ, or the like. For it will be thought that if Conscience to God were the only reason why they differ with their Brethren in any thing; that then Conscience would engage them to go along with their Brethren

Brethren in that wherein they do not differ, and to be tender and scrupulous of making the difference or breach between them wider than needs must, and of multiplying occasion of offence causelessly. Men cannot be confident when they see such men are not tender of Conscience in the one, that they are so in the other, but will be apt to suspect that their differing proceeds chiefly from some worse cause, tho the parties themselves perhaps are not aware of it, but think it proceeds from the goodness of their Conscience, when there is no such matter. And when this occasion of suspicion is given by not complying in what they can, the natural effect of it will be to weaken mens esteem of them, and affection to them, and to prepare the way to farther difference. Whereas a compliance, as far as possibly they can, would maintain a good opinion of them in mens minds, procure them fair quarter from them that differ from them, prevent the difference from growing up into a

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direct Schism, and prepare the way
to reconciliation.

For when it does indeed appear by complying as far as they can, and by other truly Christian behaviour of persons that through error of judgment differ from their Brethren in other things, that that difference proceeds purely from Conscience tho erroneous, and not from a worse Principle, their case is truly *pitiable*, and calls for tenderness towards them from them that differ from them; and to treat them accordingly, is certainly the way to gain upon them, and to make them the more capable of receiving information and satisfaction in their scruples. Whereas when they are otherwise treated with severity, it tends to spoil their good temper, and to exasperate them, and to make them out of disgust to them who have so dealt with them, to unite into Parties, and make head against them, to the imbroiling the Church in grievous Schism.

2. There

2. There is another and worse Division or Schism than meer difference in judgment and practice in some lesser things, and that division lies more in Christians unchristian managing their differences than in the difference that is in their opinion and practice when it is but about some things wherein the good or hurt of men would be little concerned, if they could be separated from their effects. And this division lies in the *immoderate* manner of contending for that wherein Christians differ. As thus; when they do not content themselves with offering their arguments fairly and peaceably for that wherein they differ, but fall out with their Brethren for not submitting to, but opposing them both in their arguments and practice, as when they set them at naught, and censure them as insincere, as not truly lovers of truth, but that they are byassed by some undue interest, of honour, reputation, or gain, or humour, or self-will, and that these prevail with them more than

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truth. Now such things as these, are of a provoking nature, and lay a temptation upon their Brethrens Passions, and tend directly to alienate affections, and minister to unpeaceable contentings, and are a direct breach of peace. Tho men have truth on their side, yet they may be Schismatical in labouring to propagate, or to defend that truth, when they go farther in doing so than *speaking the truth in love*, I mean in way of Controversie. Tho those that differ from them may possibly be moved with undue motives to oppose them, and the reasons for what they hold; yet because whether they be so or no, is a matter of which they are not competent Judges, it lying out of their reach, and belonging only to the Judgment of God, who only is the searcher of hearts, therefore whatever they may fear or suspect, yet they should forbear either to pronounce or insinuate any such hard things against their Brethren, by which they *become Judges of evil thoughts.*

thoughts. Which if they do not, they stir up strife, and violate peace by causing unquietness and disorder in the Church, and destroy Charity, weaken, yea, wound the very Spirit of the Churches Communion, which without doubt is Schism, tho it should never proceed to actual separation.

This mingling of mens Passions and unchristian Censures and insinuations with their Arguments, hinders the due operation of their Arguments upon their Antagonists minds, tho they should have truth on their side; *For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God, but hinders it, Jam. 1.20.* Whereas tho men do differ, yet so long as they propose and reply one to another no otherwise than as supposing both sides to be only in the search of truth, they may live lovingly and peaceably together, and enjoy Edifying and comfortable Communion one with another, their difference in Judgment notwithstanding.

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3. There is a division, and consequently a Schism in the Church of a higher nature than the former, and that is when the persons that divide, or cause division in the Church, unnecessarily gather into a *Party*, and do after a sort unite and combine themselves together, the more publicly and avowedly to maintain and carry on the Cause they have espoused in opposition to their Brethren, and industriously labour to increase their number as hoping thereby in time to be able to bring their opposites to submit to them, and to give up their Cause. Now if the thing or things they after this manner contend for, should be unprofitable for the Church in case they should obtain, or of so little use or benefit, as that it could never reasonably be expected that it should countervail the hurt that is or will be done to the Church, to the Communion of the Church, to the Cause of Religion in the world, and to the Souls of men in general, by being obtained in such a way, it would be

be a most grievous Schism thus to divide and imbroil the Church upon so mean an account.

A Division or Schism of this nature is termed *Faction*, which is a siding or making of Parties in the Church. And of this nature in some sort was the Schism in the Church of *Corinth*: For their Divisions were factious Divisions,, for they proceeded to making of Parties. Their Crime in this, charged upon them by *St. Paul*, is termed *Divisions* in our Bibles, but the word is *Faction* in the Margin, *1 Cor.* 3.3. And part of the works of the flesh rendred *Seditious* in our Translation, is *Divisions* or *Factions* in the Margin, *Gal.* 5. 20. This sort of Division which is accompanied with Faction, or making of Parties, is more than is found in some Divisions which yet are sinful.

Now when a Schism grows up to this height, to a combined strength, it is much worse than while it was acted only by a few apart, and in a more private way, and less taken notice

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evil work, as St. James hath told us,
Chap. 3. 16.

4. Another sort of division in the Church, is that which is made by an *unjust Separation* of one part of the Catholick Church from another in the business of their Communion in their solemn Worship: And this is a division of a very high nature indeed, especially when it is accompanied with the third sort of Division before insisted on. For if such a Division be unjustly made, it is point blank contrary to the Unity of the Spirit; that is, contrary to the Unity of Communion among Christians which was taught and practised by men inspired by the Spirit, in reference both to solemn Worship, and Christian Fellowship, as has been formerly explained. By such a Division the Churches peace is broken with a high hand, great offence being thereby taken at others, and cause of offence given to them, and a wide gap opened for debate, strife, contention, and confusion to enter in, to a dreadful destruction of Charity,
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the spirit and life of Christianity, without which Faith it self is dead, and all other religious performances little available.

It concerns us greatly therefore, and some men more especially, very diligently to inquire, how far the Divisions and Separations that do abound in our days, and in this Nation, are unjustly or justly made. To do which I do not know a more compendious way than to enquire into the nature of our National Constitution about Gods publick Worship, and the power of giving being to it, and how far we are obliged to observe it.

That such National Constitutions as have been made in several Nations for reformation from Popery, and for the establishing of the Reformed Religion and Worship in the room of it, since the beginning of the Reformation, has been so far approved of by God, as that he does reckon and esteem those Nations his Kingdoms upon that account, I have found, as I conceive, in our twelfth Inquiry.

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Which with what else is there produced and argued for the usefulness of such National Constitutions, I take to be ground sufficient to authorize a National authority in such an undertaking.

Now when ever the forming of such National Constitution is undertaken by them to whom it does belong, they must needs find, that tho the Essentials and substance of all divine Worship is expressly and particularly set down in Scripture, yet there are several Circumstances and Accidents of Worship which pertain to the external administration of the substance, which are not otherwise determined in Scripture than by general Rules; as that *Edification, Order, and Decency* be always observed in the choice of such things as are not particularly determined and set down in Scripture. Such are those I instanced in in another of our Inquiries concerning Prayer: tho all the substantial parts of it are determined in Scripture, yet we are no where limited to pray
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with a set Form, nor without one, to use or not to use Book-prayer, to kneel or to stand in Praying, nor directed whether in the Publick Worship there shall be several distinct and short Prayers used for several things, or whether all Prayer, matter fit for a publick Assembly, shall be comprised in one or more longer Prayers. And the like may be said touching several external Circumstances that are to be used in all other parts of Publick Worship.

This being the case, it will necessarily fall under the consideration of those who are imployed in the forming a publick Constitution for Worship, which of these will tend most to the Peace, Unity, and Edification of the Church, and to Decency and Order ; whether to leave all undetermined Circumstances of Worship to every ones choice, who are to administer the holy things, or in these things to chuse for them, and to determine by an Ecclesiastical Constitution what shall be observed.

Suppose

Suppose we then that upon serious consideration and consultation they come to be fully persuaded in their own minds, that to leave all, both Ministers and People, to their own choice in such undetermined Circumstances in Gods Publick Worship, would tend to great Division, Disorder, and Confusion, as it did in the late times of general Liberty, and that then we should have one opposing another in their different ways, and making of Parties one against another, to endless branglements, and to the eating out the heart and life of true Religion: And suppose also that upon such considerations as these they come to a resolution to determine all undetermined Circumstances of Publick Worship by the use of a Liturgy, except only what is to be performed in the Pulpit, as that which tends most in their Judgment, to Peace, Unity, Edification, Order, and Decency.

And when they have gone thus far in general, they will necessarily be led to proceed in the next place to
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the choice of particular Circumstances of administration of the several parts of Publick Worship. In which it is to be presumed they govern themselves according to the best of their understanding by those general Rules which direct all things to be done for Edification, Order, and Decency,

And when they have done so, and brought things to the best issue they could, yet considering that all men, and the best of men are fallible, it is not unlikely but that they may be mistaken in some things, and that such and such a Circumstance or Mode of administration of Worship would have better and more fully agreed with the general Rules, than those they have made choice of. But yet if their failings and mistakes therein do not extend to the corrupting of Gods Worship in the Essence or substance of it, but only to the ordering of some *less useful* Circumstances to be observed in the external manner of performance of that Worship, there will be no just cause of separating from

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Communion in it upon that account.

For those who *separate* from Communion in the Worship which is every Lords day performed in our Parochial Assemblies according to our Liturgy, are obliged to prove one of these two things against it, if they would justify their separation from it. Either first, that the Worship is *corrupt in the Essence* or substance of it; or secondly, that the faults or defects in the *External manner* of performance of it are such as do fall short of, and *defeat the end* for which an external way and manner of performing Publick Worship should serve and is appointed.

If they would prove such Worship corrupt in the Essence or substance of it, they must prove that it is so either in the object of Worship, or in the subject matter of it, for in those two the Essence or substance of Worship doth consist. To prove it corrupt in reference to the object of Worship, they must prove that the Worship is directed

rected to some Creature as well as to the only true God, or by some Mediator other than Christ Jesus. But this they will not pretend to do.

If they would prove it corrupt in respect of the subject matter of it, they must prove that the Prayers which are made, or the matters for which Praise is given to Almighty God, are not Prayer matter, or Thanksgiving matter, or that some other part of Worship is used as of Divine Institution which is not such. But now none of these things can be proved against the Liturgy. For no other things are therein prayed for, or thanks given to God for, but such as the *Dissenters* themselves do, may or ought to pray for or praise God for, nor any thing else observed as an Ordinance of God, but what they themselves do own to be of Divine Institution, such as Baptism and the Lords Supper. So that the whole of the Worship is *pure and uncorrupt* in respect of the *Essence* of it.

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2. If then they will prove any thing to purpose, they must prove that the faults and defects in the external manner of performing the said Worship, are such as cause it to fall short of, and do defeat the end and use for which an external administration of Publick Worship serves and is appointed.

Now the end and use of the best external Mode of Worship, is *edification*; that is, it serves to convey the object and subject matter of Worship to the mind of the Worshipers, to the end they may be suitably affected.

And this end of Worship is defeated when the Worship is performed in a Language which the People do not understand, or in such words and phrases as are insignificant of, or unsuitable to the parts of Worship to which they are applied. But neither of these things can be charged upon the Worship performed according to the Liturgy. For the Worship is performed in a Language understood by all

all the People, and in words and phrases competently significant and expressive of, and suitable to the nature of the subject matter of the Worship in its several parts, and so is agreeable to the general Rule for administration of Publick Worship, which the Apostle terms to be *uttering by the tongue, words easie to be understood*, 1 Cor. 14. By it the minds of men may be guided and conducted from one part of Worship to another, and be affected according to the different nature of the several parts of which the whole Worship doth consist; which is the proper end and use of an external Form of administration of Publick Worship.

Object. But perhaps it will be said, that the Worship performed according to the Liturgy does not so adequately and fully agree with the rule and end of the external administration of Worship in some respects, as it might have been made to do, or as some other does.

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To which I answer, That the question is not whether the external manner of Worship according to the Liturgy be the best or no in all respects; But suppose it should not, and suppose that some external Circumstances ordered by it should be, or make it to be less useful than it might have been, or than some others are; yet so long as they do but make it *less useful* to the *end* for which it serves, but do not *defeat* it, nor are destructive of it, nor of the Worship it self, but that it remains competently useful to its proper end, tho comparatively but in an inferiour degree. Suppose, I say, that all this should be granted for Argument sake, and we should proceed with them upon their own terms, yet this would be no sufficient cause of refusing Communion with the Church in the Ordinances of God thus administered.

I. For first, if it were, it could scarcely be lawful to hold Communion with any particular Church in the whole world: because it is not likely
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but that more or less of such Circumstances of Worship as are less useful, are used in all Churches in the World. For considering the fallibility of all men, and their knowing but in part at best, I think it would be no breach of Charity to suppose, that there is no Church Constitution for Worship in all the world, nor perhaps any one way of external administration of holy things humanely performed, but what is accompanied with Circumstantial defects more or less, such, I mean, as are less useful than others that might be made use of, were it not for mens imperfection that have the making or managing of them. So that the Notion or Opinion that Circumstantial defects in the external manner of Worship is a just ground of separation from it, is destructive of Catholick Communion it self.

2. None account themselves guilty of or defiled by the defects that are in the manner of a Ministers praying in the Pulpit, so long as the

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matter is good : and there is the same reason in reference to Circumstantial defects in Prayers made by the Liturgy. We can hardly say that any public Prayer is so free from all defects, but either in respect of the Method, or manner of expressing the matter, it might possibly be better done than usually it is done even by good men. And therefore it is a very unreasonable thing to make Circumstantial defects in the manner of praying, a ground of separation from Communion in Prayer.

3. If it were lawful to separate from Communion in Worship, only because less usefully administered ; then tho there should be no Liturgy in the case, yet where one Minister does but excel another in his Ministration, it would be lawful to separate from that Congregation where the Worship or other Ministration is less usefully performed, and in a manner inferior to what is done by another in another place. But no man will be so absurd as to say this may be practised,
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for if it might, there would be no end of separation, but a door would be opened to all confusion, and People must be separating as often as they conceive they have found one Minister of a Congregation to excel another in the manner of his Ministration. And if Separation may not be practised upon this account, then it cannot be duly practised for that reason that the manner of Worship performed according to the Liturgy, is less useful and less edifying than that which is or may be done after another manner.

4, It is not the *external manner* of Worship, but the *essential matter* that is the *Rule* of Christians agreement in one Catholick Communion in Worship throughout the world. In the one they are strictly bound up by particular determination; in the other they are left more at large to govern themselves to the best of their understanding by general Rules. And the different Circumstances under which Christians are in several Nations, will necessitate them
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to use some difference in practice even while they govern themselves by the same general Rules. *Do all things to edifying; Let the peace of God rule in your hearts to which ye are called in one body,* are two general Rules; and Christians are to have respect to the one as well as the other in ordering their practice: The same Circumstances of Worship will not tend both to edification and to peace also, at one time and in one place, which will do so at another. These Rules touching Edification and Peace would lead a man to do otherwise in his Communion in Publick Worship with the Churches in *France*, in *Geneva*, in *Holland*, if he should sojourn in these places, than he does while he is here in *England*, and observes the usages of this National Church: For it would not tend to peace and edification for such an one to make a disturbance by labouring to set on foot among them all the same Circumstances of Worship he had been accustomed to here because he likes them better. And the same is true
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of such as come from those forein Churches to sojourn here, or in any other Reformed Church. The right way of maintaining true Catholick Communion, is to refuse Communion with no Church in any Country that is Orthodox in the Faith, and in the Essence of Worship, and is not Schismatical, notwithstanding any difference there may be in the degrees of usefulness in the external manner of Worship, between one Church and another, so long as they are all useful to their end in some good measure, and agreeable to general Rules in that case. I cannot take him for a right Catholick Christian that can have no Communion with any Church where he comes but where the external Mode of Worship agrees with that which he most affects. *When I am at Rome I fast on Saturdays, when I am here (at Milan) I do not,* said St. Ambrose to St. Austin.

5. One external Mode of Worship is not therefore useless because another is more useful: For a greater degree
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of usefulness herein does not exclude a less, but only excel it. The gesture of Kneeling in Prayer is better, and more suitable to the nature of the duty than that of standing; yet that does not make it unlawful to pray standing; One Version of the Psalms is more useful to its end than another; yet that does not make it unlawful to joyn with those who use that which is less useful. Nay, I will say more than this; That Mode of Worship which is best under some Circumstances, is not so under others: As when it cannot be used without causing such a division in the Church as will produce most pernicious effects, in reference to the Church it self, and to Religion. Upon which account the Dissenters ought to esteem it better to joyn in the Worship performed by the Liturgy, than in that performed in their Assemblies under the ill Circumstances which do attend it, tho they esteem theirs to be better abstractedly considered.

6. If a less degree of usefulness in the external manner of Worship should be allowed to be a sufficient ground of Separation from Communion in it where it is used, our Church divisions would be irreparable and beyond all remedy in whose hands soever the ordering the external Circumstances and manner of Worship may fall, be they the *Dissenters* themselves, or any other. For when they shall have done the best they can therein, there will be others who will find out some Circumstantial defects in it that will in their judgment (and perhaps according to truth too) render it less useful than it was capable of being made. There is such a difference in the thoughts and apprehensions of wise and good men themselves, and much more in those that are weaker, that it is impossible unless they were all divinely inspired, that they should all agree to a Circumstance in such a thing as the external manner of Worship, but that some will think this, and others will think that might have been better done than it is. .. There

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There is a necessity therefore, unless we resolve to perpetuate division and separation, to take up with the best external way and manner of Publick Worship we can obtain from the wisdom of the Nation, so long as it is competently useful to its end, and not to divide and separate upon account of our esteeming it less useful than we desire. For otherwise it is not to be expected that the best wisdom that is to be found in the Nation should ever be able to find out any way or means of curing our Church divisions, and to put an end to our unchristian-like separations? And to give liberty for every one to do that which he esteemeth best, is farthest of all from working such a Rule.

Object. But it may be it will be said, and indeed is alledged by some, That since every man is to worship and serve God in the best manner he can, it follows, that therefore if there be one way of Publick Worship, which he esteems better than another, he is to make use of that when he has
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opportunity of doing so. And by this those that do esteem the external manner of Worship used in separate Assemblies to be better than that performed by the Liturgy in Parochial Congregations, do labour to defend their separation.

To this several things are to be said.

1. In ordering the Mode or manner of Publick Worship, respect is to be had, not to what is most acceptable to one sort of men only, but to what is useful and profitable for the whole Community, as well those who are of a lower capacity as those of a higher, as well those who desire a Liturgy, as those that do not, and to what is most likely to preserve peace among them. And when the Government to this end hath ordered that part of the Publick Worship shall be performed by the Liturgy, and has allowed a liberty of performing part of it without by Pulpit Prayer ; provision is thereby made to accommodate both the one and the other in the

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the external manner of Worship. And Christian ingenuity and *Charity which seeketh not her own*, will teach men to be content that others should be accommodated as well as themselves in things wherein they may, rather than to make a division in the Church because all things are not ordered just as they would have them. And of this truly Christian strain was *St. Paul*, which made him say, *I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved*, 1 Cor. 10.33. And that it has been the judgment of the Church from Age to Age, that it is best for the Church, all things considered, that the Publick Worship, at least in part, should be performed by a Liturgy, appears by their having ordered that so it should be. And this ought to weigh much with humble and modest men, remembring what *St. Paul* hath said in another case, to shew what esteem ought to be had of the Usages and Customs of the Churches of God: *If any man seem contentious, we have no such*

Such Custom, neither the Churches of God, 1 Cor. II. 16.

2. To satisfy, yea, to convince such as are under a prejudice against worshipping God by the use of our English Liturgy, that there is no such difference as they fancy between the worshipping God according to that, in conjunction with Pulpit Worship, and that way of Worship which they so much prefer before it, I shall offer this to their consideration, viz. That there live as worthy men for Piety and Learning, both Conformists and Non-conformists, as perhaps ever England bred, lived and died in Communion in that Worship which has been performed by our English Liturgy, from the beginning of the Reformation downward. And we may well conclude that their Souls would never have prospered and flourished so, as no mens more, if there had been any such difference as some men imagine between the way of their Communion and that of others. Men do not gather Grapes of thorns, nor Figs of thistles.

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thistles. That the souls of many prosper no better under it, proceeds not from the nature of the provision for them, but from their own gross neglect both of it, and of themselves, who doubtless would be such as they are, whatever the manner of Worship is in the places where they live.

3. If we have, in the place where the providence of God hath set us, means of worshipping God publicly, competently useful and sufficient to the ends of such Worship, tho it should in some respects be inferiour to some other; yet if we can have no better without breaking Order, and running into confusion, nor without breaking one Commandment to observe another, nor without making our selves guilty of an unlawful separation, and all the dreadful consequences of it, we may be said to worship God in the best manner we can, tho we content our selves with this, provided we be not wanting to improve it the best we can to its end. And the reason is, because we then perform the best

best Worship we can that will consist with edification, Publick Order, and the peace of the Church: and a Worship wherein all these concur, does best answer to general Rules for the manner of Publick Worship, taken together.

4. For men to separate from Parochial Communion in the Worship performed according to the Liturgy, to the end God may be worshipped by them after a better manner in separate Assemblies, *is to do evil that good may come of it*; unless they can prove a necessity so to separate or to sin. For that to separate without such a necessity *is to do evil*, is a Protestant *Maxim* assented to on all hands among them. And that they are under no such necessity as to sin if they do not so separate, I have shewed before, by shewing that the said Worship is neither corrupt in the essence of it, nor is the external manner of performance of it deficient as to its end and use; one of which must be proved against it, before separation

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ration from it can be justified.

5. By such a separation as that we speak of, men really do much more disservice to God and the great concerns of Religion and the Souls of men, than they can with any colour of reason pretend that by worshipping God without the Liturgy, they honour him or Religion, or advantage the Souls of men. The effects of such a Separation are very visible which do too naturally flow from it; such as the destruction of Peace, Charity, and Humility, the engendering of Envy, Hatred, Strife, and Contention, to the great reproach of Religion, and dishonour of Almighty God, and the hurt of mens Souls. But how these great evils can be pretended to be counterballanced by their Worship being performed without the Liturgy, I understand not; but do take it to be a matter past doubt, that the benefit which those that separate get by their Communion without a Liturgy over and above what they might have gained by Communion where that is used, will

will never equal the hurt they draw upon themselves and others, and the wrong they do to Religion by their separation: And if not, then when ever the account comes to be made up, and their loss to be compared with their gain, they will be found exceeding great losers by their separation, notwithstanding all the advantages they promised themselves by it.

Thus far to shew that there is no just cause of separating from Communion in the Worship performed by the Liturgy every Lords day. As for the gesture of kneeling in the act of receiving the Lords Supper; so much hath been written to prove it no sin, and so little that looks like an Argument to prove the contrary, that if men of understanding would but lay aside prejudice, and impartially compare and consider what hath been said on both sides, I cannot think that after this, any could be long without satisfaction touching the lawfulness of complying with publick Order in that matter; especially considering how

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much is declared at the end of the Office for administration of the Lords Supper in the Liturgy, to clear that gesture in that action from all suspicion of Bread-worship, more than in the Liturgy in use in the old Non-conformists days when they scrupled it.

But if any after they have done thus shall not for all that be satisfied, yet that can be no more an Argument to them than it was to the old Non-conformists, why they should not hold Communion in the rest of the Lords-day Worship as they did; and not only so, but pressed it also on others as their duty to do so, and zealously inveyed against separation from it as a great evil, as their Writings do abundantly shew. And that for such to hold Communion with their Brethren so far as they can, is plain matter of duty, I have shewed before. And in case they should thus hold Communion in the other parts of Worship, they need no more to live without the use of the Lords Supper than

than the old Non-conformists did, since I doubt not but they know how to be therein accommodated as well as they did, and as they were.

And so for Baptism, in case they cannot be active in the use of the Cross *after it*, yet they may be passive, in as much as it is not used as any sign of Gods conveying grace as Sacraments are, but only as a token of duty; nor as any Rite in Baptism neither, but only in receiving the Persons baptized into the Church after they are baptized, and seems to be no more ground of scruple, than laying the hand upon, and kissing the Book in swearing is, which is a piece of Divine Worship, which none scruple but *Quakers*.

There are others who frame to themselves other reasons of separation from Parochial Communion in Worship besides its being performed by the Liturgy; as namely, because those Congregations are not as they pretend, constituted of visible Saints, nor by a Church Covenant. Who these are

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is well known, for whose sakes several of my former Inquiries are made: in which there are such things produced from the holy Scriptures as may, I suppose, be sufficient to satisfy their reason if not their prejudice touching their mistake in these opinions.

As for their exceptions against the Government of the Church by Bishops as *Diocesan*, how they would make Communion with the particular Congregations under their Jurisdiction unlawful upon that account, I understand not; unless they think the Ministers of those Congregations by whom the Ordinances are administered, to be no true Ministers; because Episcopally ordained, and not by Presbyters. And if this should be their scruple, they may easily receive satisfaction by considering that *Diocesan Bishops* were *Presbyters* before they were Bishops, and therefore must needs remain so after. For they were not devided of any Ministerial power or authority by being made Bishops, but only invested

invested with a superaddition of authority and power they had not before. So that they who are ordained by them, are ordained by a Presbyterial authority and more. And with this the old Nonconformists satisfied themselves touching the validity of their Ministerial authority received by Ordination from the Bishops that then were.

Some again dislike Parochial Communion, because the Civil Power is so much concerned as it is in Ecclesiastical affairs relating to it one way or other, and for that all such things are not left wholly to the ordering of Ecclesiastical Rulers, as they were in the Apostles times, and long after.

But there is not the same reason why they should be so left now, as there was why they were so then. The reason why they were wholly left then to the ordering of an Ecclesiastical Power, was, because there was no Civil Powers as *Christian* then in being, so that they could not promote

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promote Christianity better, any other way. But it is not so now: for it is shewed in our last former Inquiry but one, that the affairs of the Gospel and the Salvation of men in a Christian Kingdom or State, may better be provided for, and promoted by a national Constitution, than they can be without it. And that therefore things of this nature are not to be ordered as if we were still in a *Pagan* Kingdom when we are not.

For where the reason of things is altered, it is but reasonable and fit that there should be a suitable alteration in the things themselves. Thus the gesture of standing with Loyns girt and a Staff in the hand, appointed to be used in eating the Pasover at the first Institution of it, for that it was then to be eaten in *haste*, was afterwards altered to another gesture by the Church, when that Circumstance of eating in *haste* ceased; and our Saviour himself did eat it in that posture to which the Church had changed it, which is a consideration
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of very great weight in reference to this and some other cases. And the Obligation of the Ceremonial Law ceased upon the same ground when the substance was come which had been prefigured by Ceremonial Rites. And the like might be observed touching the discontinuance and disuse of anointing the sick, washing Disciples feet, and the kiss of Charity, and some other things which were obliging until the reason of the Obligation ceased.

But altho the Civil Power doth concern it self by a National Constitution to order and direct in things appertaining to the Church, for the promoting of Religion, and the Salvation of men, yet it does not this without the advice and assistance of those that are Officers, and bear rule in the Church. And when the Civil Powers have gone as far as they think fit in ordering and directing by Ecclesiastical advice and assistance, yet they do not act any thing themselves peculiar to the Ministry of the Church, but

but leave all such things wholly to them who are invested with Ministerial authority ; reserving only to themselves a power of restraining such men from an undue exercise of their Office tending to publick disturbance.

And thus I have endeavoured to satisfy the *Dissenters*, that there is no sufficient reason or cause for them to separate from the Publick Worship of our Parochial Assemblies, and that their pretences for their doing so when narrowly looked into, are found to have nothing of substance in them sufficient to bear them out in it, And if I am not mistaken in my Allegations and reasonings, I cannot discern how their separation can possibly be defended from being an unlawful Schism. And if it be, I am sure they have upon many accounts great reason to desist from engaging farther in it.

QUERY XV.

Supposing things touching visible Church-Membership and Communion to be as they have been represented in our former Inquiries; yet how do they tend to lessen our Church Divisions?

The answer to which is, That if the matters of our Inquiry be as they have been represented, then they tend to lessen our Church-divisions, by removing and taking away the very foundation on which they and our Church-separations are in great part at least built. For I do not know any one of the different Parties among the Protestant Dissenters (except those called *Presbyterian*) who do not found their separation from our Parish Churches (at least principally) upon this supposition that they are not constituted according to the order of the Gospel. And why not according to the
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the Order of the Gospel, but because as they say they are not constituted of Gospel matter, that is not of visible Saints, but of such as for a great part of them at least, were never duly reputed to be regenerate, or to be of the Invisible Church, and their meaning is (as I collect both from their Writings and Converse) That they were not at first, nor since constituted of such particular members only as at the time of such their Constitution, had a probable appearance of Regeneration, but of all baptized persons, however they proved good or bad, and without any other probation or discrimination.

Now if those things be true which have been endeavoured to be proved to be so in the management of the former Enquiries; Then this ground on which they build their separation, is altogether unsound, and such as has no firmness or substance in it, but is only imaginary. For our Parish Congregations are constituted of persons visibly in Covenant with God the Father, Son,

Son, and Holy Ghost, by being baptized in their name, and thereby engaged to be theirs, to worship and serve the Father by the Son through the assistance of the Spirit. And of such, and no other, were the Churches planted by the Apostles, constituted: And this Covenanting was then, and so is now, the visible formal difference between those of the Visible Church and those of the world: All under this Character and Badge, and none but they, were of the Visible Church; and therefore it must needs be the Constitutive form of that Relation, Visible Church-membership, *All that have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*, and are visibly Christians, and of Christs Church. How ancient and how long before Christs appearance in the world in our nature, this way of constituting Visible Church-members has been by such a Rite as God appointed, I have shewed before.

And if this visible Covenanting with God by Baptism be that by which

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which persons become Members of the Visible Church, then a probable appearance of Regeneration, or a reputation of being of the Church, as invisible cannot be it that makes them visible Church Members, tho it does qualify them for it, unless this probable appearance of Regeneration, and Covenanting with God by Baptism, be one and the same thing: And if they be, then those of which our Parish Churches are constituted, have a probable appearance of Regeneration, or of being of the Invisible Church, and then they are constituted of ~~matter~~ according to those Dissenters own mind: And if so, then we may well hope they will no longer separate from them, as if they were not Constituted of qualified matter. So that things are brought at last to this issue, That these Dissenters must either overthrow this Plea against the reason and ground of their Separation, and prove that visible Covenanting with God by Baptism is not that by which Visible Church-membership is made;

or

or else it will certainly overthrow this Plea of theirs for their Separation. And if they will so much as attempt to overthrow this Plea against them; they must row all the way against the stream and strong tide of the Scriptures, and against the stream of Antiquity, and the sense of the ancient Church from the Apostles times downwards; who always esteemed Baptism the *door of entrance* into the Visible Church; and consequently that all such as had pass'd through Baptism, were within the Church.

And as it is more agreeable to Scripture, so it is much more reasonable to say, that men cannot seem to be of the Church as Invisible, without being first of the Church as Visible, than it is to say their being of the Church as Visible, proceeds from their seeming to be of the Church as Invisible. For as touching mens enterance into the Church by Baptism, our Saviour hath said, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God,* Joh. 3. 5.

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And Baptism is injoynd in order to the obtaining Remission of sin and Salvation, which are Priviledges of the Church as Invisible, *Acts* 2. 38. and 22. 16. *Mar.* 16. 16. So that according to these Scriptures, mens being and seeming to be of the Church as Invisible, and their sharing in the Priviledges of it, seems ordinarily to depend upon their being of the Visible Church by Baptism.

Now one would think a Notion so preposterous as this opposed appears to be, should be very unfit to make a foundation to build Churches upon, or to justify a separation from those which have a substantial foundation, the Scriptures I mean.

But if mens seeming in the apprehension of others to be of the Church as Invisible, did not depend upon their being of the Church Visible, yet such seeming could be no proper or fit Rule by which to judg, determine, and conclude who are, and who are not of the Visible Church. And the reason is, because it is *Arbitrarious*
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and uncertain: for mens being or not being acknowledged to be of the Visible Church, would depend upon the uncertainty of mens opinions and affections: and those would seem in some mens apprehensions to be of the Church Invisible, which to others would seem otherwise: And then those would be owned by some to be of the Visible Church, which would be denied to be so by others. Of the truth of all which this present Age hath furnished us with plentiful experience: And if this should be the Rule observed through the whole Christian world, it would be the ready way to make Parties and Sidings, unchristian oppositions, and uncharitable censurings among Christians, in all parts of the world, as it has done here in this Nation.

Whereas to be visibly in Covenant with God by Baptism, is a *certain, fixed, a common, open and publick Rule*, by which to judg who are of the Visible Church, so long as they continue to own themselves under the obligation

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of that Covenant; and have neither
so far violated it as to give Divine Wor-
ship to other Objects than their God,
nor incurr'd to themselves Excommu-
nication by Heresie, or other scanda-
lous living. And this Rule gives no occa-
sion of division in the Church as the
other does, but tends to bind and hold
the several Members together in *the uni-
ty of the Spirit and bond of peace*: To
which purpose St. Paul urgeth it upon
the Christians, motive-wise, *Eph. 4.*

All these things considered, one
would wonder how men of Learning
and Piety should ever be betrayed in-
to such Notions and Principles, and to
lay so mighty a stress on them as they
have done, when yet they have no
more colour from Scripture or reason
than ever yet they have been able to
produce for their defence.

But to make the best of it I can,
we will suppose it was the appearance
of a more thorow Reformation, and
more pure Communion, which in
their apprehension was to be obtained
by these new Methods, that first
drew

drew them into this way. Reformation and pure Communion, are things which sound mighty well in good mens ears, and which they can easily believe to be well pleasing unto God. And as there is an appearance of *greater strictness* in that way than in that of more general Communion, so it was easie for them hereupon to think *there was more purity in it also*; which has been the prevailing reason which has carried multitudes into *Quakerism*. And when such an opinion has once seated it self in mens minds, they quickly grow confident that nothing in Scripture can be against it: and then they can easily fancy that every slight appearance and sound of words in Scripture is for them, upon which they can but put such a gloss as shall favour them, though it be nothing to their purpose when impartially scann'd.

And had their opinions and practice which I have opposed, and wherein they differ from all other good men, been matter of purity indeed, I should not

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have made One to find fault with them. But if this their Way be disagreeable to Gods pure Word, (which is the Rule by which we must judg of what is pure, and what is impure) and if it run counter to our Lords Method laid down in the Scripture of ordering the affairs of his Church, in very material points, then it will be found an impure practice, a sinful mixture, and a corruption to be purged out of the Church: And yet such it is, if I have not misrepresented that Method of our Lord in the general tenour of my Inquiries. And indeed, if I have not taken wrong measures, and unless very much mistaken, their Communion in their state of Separation, if taken altogether, and the terms on which it is held, must needs be far more impure than the Parochial Communion they have withdrawn from.

There are extreams on both hands, as well on the right hand as on the left: and there is a proneness in men to run into the one by flying from the other. And good men, especially in matters
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of publick Reformation, are through mistaken zeal more in danger of running into an extreme on the right hand than into one on the left, and in flying from *Babylon*, to run beyond *Jerusalem*. And there is a danger of doing much hurt in the Church by *over-doing* as well as there is by *under-doing*, and both extremes are carefully to be avoided.

The *New England* Ministers in their Answer to Mr. *Davenport*, formerly mentioned, do say; *We may be very injurious to Christ as well as the Souls of men, by too much straitening and narrowing the bounds of his Kingdom or Visible Church here on earth. Certainly enlargement, so it be a regular enlargement, is a very desirable thing. In Church Reformation it is an observable truth (saith Pareus on the Parable of the Tares) that they which are for too much straitness do more hurt than profit the Church. So much they, p. 45. Thus the mistaken zeal of the Donatists and Novatians of old, for a purer Church, and purer Communion, as*

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was thought or pretended put **them** upon separating from other **Orthodox** Christians, which proved an inlet to the most unchristian practices imaginable, for the carrying on their undertaken Reformation, and destructive of the peace of the Church in the highest, and lamentably scandalous to the Christian Religion; in the Doctrinal part whereof notwithstanding they were for the most part all agreed, as we are now, and differ mostly about Disciplinary Points as they did then.

Such a strictness in Church Reformation as does so narrow and lessen the Visible Church, as to endeavour to reduce it to the size of the Invisible, is many ways hurtful, as I have shewed in my Reasons for the contrary. It tends to hinder and lessen the great work of thorow and sound Conversion in the Church: It tends to hinder the spreading and propagating of the Christian Religion: It tends to harden men in an unsafe condition: It tends to deprive good men of
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Communion with the Church, under the Notion of *bad*: It tends to ruine the Church as to its existence in the world: And lastly, it tends to beget and foment divisions, contentions, feuds, envyings, strifes, and undue censurings among Christians, and so to cast the Church into a sickly state, and such as threatens her spiritual life: Besides, the encouragement and advantage which is thereby given to our common Enemies to plot and attempt against us. And thus *over-doing*, is indeed *undoing*.

And lest any should be offended at a discourse against over-much strictness. It ought to be considered that there is a great difference between a mans being strict towards himself, and in reference to his own practice, and his being strict and severe towards others in depriving them of the outward Priviledges of Christian Professors. A man cannot well be too strict in keeping a narrow watch over his own heart, words, and ways,
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in governing his Appetites, Thoughts and Passions, Tongue and Actions. Nor does this kind of strictness depend upon such a purity of Communicants or Communion in which no Carnal Christians have any share: But it depends upon, or rather it consists in a due attention of mens minds to their own duty, and to the opportunities of receiving good by the Ordinances of God.

The rest of the Guests in the Parable were not the worse, nor did fare the worse, for that there was one among them that had not on the Wedding Garment. The ordinances of God do not the less avail good men that with a due frame of mind wait upon God in them, tho unregenerate men participate with them therein.

And when by the Censures of the Church, Capital Offenders, and notorious scandalous Persons are deprived of Communion with the Church, it is not for that reason as if the Ordinances of God were the less useful
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to the good by such mens sharing in them: But it is to bring such Persons to shame, and by that means to repentance, and to free the Church from that dishonour which otherwise would stick upon it for tolerating such scandalous persons among them: And partly also for admonition to others, and to prevent the tainting of such as are less wary by their ill example and familiar converse. But otherwise bad mens sharing in external Communion with the Church, is no ways likely to hinder the growth of good men in grace, or their profiting by the Ordinances of God there administred. *To the pure all things are pure:* Bad men cannot in the least pollute the Ordinances of God to the good by their participating with them in them.

And therefore if God would have such as are not obnoxious to Excommunication for Capital Crimes, tho not Regenerate, to be continued in the Church, being once received into it by Baptism, to the end they might
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be under the influence of his Ordinances for their Conversion: I say, if God would have it thus in order to their Conversion; no good man should envy or grudge them this benefit of enjoying the means of such Conversion. And they especially should not who have themselves been Converted and Regenerated in the same way of general Communion, and by the means therein afforded; which yet has been the case, I doubt not, of such as have been leading men in modelling this new Church way, as it has been of many others. For their Congregations at the first, and long after, consisted scarcely of any other than what had been drawn out of the Parochial Congregations where they had been Converted, if they were indeed Converted, as they supposed them to be, before their incorporating and associating in their new way. And if they had continued in the same way wherein they were by Gods blessing upon the means of Grace they therein enjoyed, made such as they then were;

were, they might without doubt have attained to as much growth in all Christian Virtues as ever they did afterwards, and, I think, much more, provided they had but diligently and carefully improved the same means and opportunities by which they had acquired what they had then attained to.

For the Word and Ordinances of the Gospel which are the means of increase of Grace as well as of the beginning of it, are the same, and will produce the same effects in those who with a good frame of mind attend upon God in them, as well when unregenerate men share in them as when they do not. And therefore neither the holy Prophets, or other holy men of greatest Piety under the Old Testament, nor our Saviour or his Apostles, or any other holy men in the Primitive times of Christianity, did ever decline the Publick Worship, or the use of Gods Ordinances in such Assemblies where bad men, as well as good, had Communion
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in them. Such a mixture of bad with good cannot hinder good men from any growth in Grace by those Ordinances, if they have but a due care to make the best improvement of them they can. And therefore there can be no need of separating and new associating in reference to mens own growth in Grace, tho we should suppose it possible they could be sure it were simply lawful. Which makes such separation on the one had, and associating on the other, the more inexcusable, when it causes so much hurt to the Church in general; and such obstruction to the success of the Gospel in the world, as hath been shewn it does, and would do more if it should more generally prevail.

The *few names* in the Church of *Sardis* did not defile their Garments by communicating with the greater number of those that had: Nor did they thereby deprive themselves of the benefit which Christ designed them by his Ordinances, either by having their minds discomposed by
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such a mixture of Communicants, or otherwise : For if they had, we cannot think that our Saviour, who walked in the midst of his golden Candlesticks, *seatehing the reins and the hearts to give to every one according to their works*, would have applauded them as he did, with promise of great reward, saying, *They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy*, Rev. 3. 4.

And now for a Conclusion, That no man may take offence at the Discourse in these Papers, nor at me for the sake of it, I must inform those that are most likely to do so, of two things :

First, That if I had discerned that what is herein pleaded had had no better foundation than some few obscure Texts of Scripture of dubious and uncertain Interpretation, I should not thus far have engaged in it as I have done. But if it shall appear to others, as it does to me, that I have the general Stream of the Scriptures on my side herein, both of the Old Testament and of the New, both
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as to matter of Doctrine, and matter of Fact ; I hope I shall be excused for making this Essay for the satisfaction of those that most need it.

Secondly, That I take the scope and design of the whole of the Discourse in these Papers, to be perfectly agreeable to Christian Charity, as tending to no mans hurt, but to the general good of all sorts, else I should not have been satisfied in it. For I know not how to think any thing Orthodox in Divinity, which is against Charity. Now if the extent of Visible Church-Membership and Communion pleaded for, tends more to the Conversion of such of them as are unregenerate, and not otherwise obnoxious to Excommunication, than the excluding such from both would do, then what I plead for is great Charity to them.

And this extent of Visible Church-Membership and Communion, tends to propagate and spread the Christian Religion among those that are yet without the Church more than the narrower

narrower way can do, as has been shewn, and therefore its matter of Charity to them also.

And in that this more general way of Visible Church-Membership and Communion is not pleaded to the denying the usefulness of Excommunication in reference to Capital Offenders, but the contrary, that's matter of Charity to them also: Because by that they may be brought to shame, and so unto Repentance, when they see all sober Christians ashamed to own them, or to be numbred with them, as being a disgrace to the Religion they profess. And I am so far from being less for the exercise of Church-Discipline upon the proper Objects of it, than our Dissenting Friends are, That I think it a piece of great uncharitableness towards gross Sinners, when it is neglected by them to whom the exercise of it does belong. Only I would have the Scripture Rules observed in the exercise of it, and not to use such severity as to exclude all such from Church.

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Communion as may be suspected to be unregenerate, when yet not guilty of any Heresie, scandalous Crimes, or gross ignorance: For men may give occasion of suspicion of their unregeneracy by such sinful neglects of doing good, as yet may be no just ground of Excommunication.

Neither is this more extensive way of Visible Church-Membership and Communion, hurtful to those that are good, but gives them opportunity of doing the more good; and therefore is no matter of uncharitableness unto them neither. For this will not hinder them from being as good as they have a mind to be, if nothing else do. They may be as strict as they will in reference to themselves: And they will not be at the less, but the more liberty to converse with the best men for their own improvement in wisdom and goodness.

And then it will be beneficial to them by putting them into a capacity and giving them an opportunity of doing more good than otherwise they could. For while good men do not
separate

separate themselves from formal Professors of the same Religion, nor exclude them from Communion with them in the means of Grace; they the better preserve their own esteem among them, and the esteem of that wherein they excel them; and they will be the more ready to hearken to them in their advice and counsel, and in their admonition or reproof, and the sooner be brought to imitate their Virtues. Whereas a contrary carriage produces contrary effects. For separation from Neighbours as no Members of a truly Christian Church when yet they are so, breeds more or less estrangedness between them, and that begets prejudices against them, and jealousies and suspicions concerning them as men wanting in true Christian Charity and Humility, which will make them the less valued, and their good Counsels and Exhortations the less regarded, and their good example in what is worthy imitation, the less taking with, and the less gaining upon such men.

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A Discourse likewise which evinceth a more extensive Visible Church-Membership and Communion to be approved of by God than these Dissenting Brethren will allow, must needs be matter of Charity to themselves more especially. For it tends to rescue and deliver them from such error as makes them injurious to the Church of God, and the affairs of the Gospel in the World. And what good man is there that would not be glad to be delivered from such apprehensions as made him troublesome even to good men themselves without any cause! And from such opinions as have kindled a fire of contention and discord in the Church, destructive of that Christian Charity without which all we do in Religion will signifie nothing. It is certainly a great grief to all good men that there should be any bar in the way to keep them at any undue distance from one another, and consequently it must be very grateful to them when ever it is removed.

This

This more general way of Visible Church-Membership and Communion, being then more useful and beneficial to all sorts of men than the other is, and truly hurtful to none: I say, it being a way and Method so full of Charity in the nature of it, and so agreeable to Moral Principles of wisdom and goodness as it appears to be, would commend it self to right reason, and to that natural light that is in men, if it should not have had that evidence from supernatural Revelation to back and authorize it which it has. The consideration of which, as it was a great motive to me to engage in the defence of it, so I hope it will plead my excuse in every good mans Conscience for this undertaking. For indeed, I that do certainly know my own mind, do know that I have more love and true respect for the Persons whose Opinions I have herein opposed, than to wish or do any thing that tends to their hurt.

And

And now methinks I might reasonably promise this to my self, that such as love Truth for truth sake, and are of the number of those that will *buy the truth*, but not *sell it* at any rate whatsoever, should not be unwilling to lay aside all prejudice and self interest, and to consider impartially a thing of this nature by what hand soever it be prepared; and yet that is all that I desire from them for whose sakes this Discourse was composed.

THE END.
